Marxism on Vedanta

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The overwhelming majority of the papers brought together in this volume as well as the consensus of the conference, held on 6-7 May 1975 under the auspices of the Central Party Education Department of the Central Executive Committee of the CPI, are sharply critical of the book *The Universe of Vedanta* by Bani Deshpande since it contains very serious mistakes both in relation to the study of Indian philosophy as well as the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

It was necessary to do this not only to defend the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism but to creatively use it to study our extraordinarily rich philosophical and scientific heritage.

No doubt Indian history, also the history of Indian philosophy, is very rich. India produced such outstanding logicians and philosophers as Kapila, Kanada, Yajnavalkya, Buddha and so on. India also produced the important materialist schools in ancient times—the Charvak and Lokayata schools, and other prominent materialist schools including the early Sankhya system.

But from this it is erroneous to draw conclusion that they were more advanced than modern science and thought. Rather they should be looked upon as stepping stones towards modern developments. At every step they were conditioned by the level of productive forces.

The reactionary revivalist forces are using the rich traditions of Indian history, philosophy and culture to show themselves off as the champions and inheritors of Indian culture and tradition. Their aim is to prove that Marxism is 'alien' to the Indian soil, that Marxism kills spiritual activity.

(Continued on back flap)

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MARXISM ON VEDANTA

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Papers of the Conference on
The Universe of Vedanta,
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INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming majority of the papers brought together in this volume as well as the consensus of the conference to which they were presented are sharply critical of the book *The Universe of Vedanta* by Bani Deshpande since it contains very serious mistakes both in relation to the study of Indian philosophy as well as the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

It was necessary to do this not only to defend the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism but to creatively use it to study our extraordinarily rich philosophical and scientific heritage.

The Communist Party of India is immensely proud of this heritage and of the great contributions we have made to progressive world culture. The criticism of the above-mentioned book does not in the least mean that the CPI in any way underestimates, much less denigrates, the progressive trends and aspects of our great cultural philosophical heritage. As a matter of fact one of its important tasks is to win this heritage for our people who have been cut off from it in many ways by the exploiting classes through the centuries.

Indian philosophy is an important sphere of ideological struggle in the present confrontation between the forces of progress and reaction. The reactionary revivalist forces are using the rich traditions of Indian history, philosophy and culture to further their nefarious game. Their aim is to show themselves off as the champions and inheritors of Indian culture and tradition. By so doing they want to win the sympathy and support of the masses. It is precisely the agents of imperialism and reaction who some-

times pose today as purely 'national' and 'Indian' forces. It is sought to be proved that they have nothing in common with, rather nothing to do at all with, any 'foreign' ideology and philosophy.

The aim of reaction is to cut the masses off from the influence of Marxism. Therefore they try to prove that Marxism is 'alien' to the Indian soil. Revivalist and orthodox organisations are using various forms through which it is propagated that Marxism kills spiritual activity of the individual and pulls people towards material reality. This attachment of the people to the material reality is the source of all ills. In other words, ideological representatives of our class enemies try to divert the attention of the masses from the realities of exploitation and to channel it towards some nonexistent 'spiritual world'.

In order to prove the nonapplicability of Marxism to Indian society, the reactionary and communal forces have been persistently trying to paint Indian philosophy as pure idealism and spiritualism, with no place for materialism. Some schools designate the materialist trends in Indian philosophy as enemies of everything 'Hindu' and 'vedic' and therefore non-Indian.

But there is still another trend, and a sophisticated one. Mortally afraid of the victories of Marxism, of dialectical and historical materialism, all over the world and in India, afraid of the advance of science and scientific methodology, this reactionary trend propagates the false view that everything achieved by Marxism today, and by science in modern times, was already there in the vedas and upanishads etc.! Therefore nothing new has been achieved. It is rather the other way round: Marxism has learned or stolen everything from our Indian philosophy and has tried to be original.

This reactionary, chauvinist view is extremely dangerous. Its slanders against Marxism aim at isolating the most revolutionary philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism.

India's history, also the history of Indian philosophy, is very rich. India produced such outstanding logicians and philosophers as Kapila, Kanada, Yajnavalkya, Buddha and so on. India also produced the important materialist school in ancient times. The charvak school, and other prominent materialist schools including the early sankhya system.

The contribution of Indian philosophers has been great, both of materialist and idealist philosophers. Indian philosophy has shown a high level of logic. The dialectical outlook is to be found in the buddhist and jaina philosophy, etc. The atomistic theory of Kanada is well known. The atheists of India engaged in a high level of theoretical argumentation in the process of denial of the existence of god.

The theory of causation, the use of the category of cause and effect, was an important feature of some of the Indian philosophies like sankhya and buddhism. For its time the theory of knowledge of Indian philosophy was quite significant. There were many correct ideas of space, time, materiality, ideal world, etc.

A certain amount of development of science, significant for those times, also helped a great deal in the development of materialist philosophy. Indian society contributed a lot to astronomy, mathematics, science of medicine known as ayurveda, alchemy and chemical practices, etc.

Beginning with the long-stretched stone age between 1,50,000 BC and 3000 BC, scientific and technological developments took definite shape in the Harappa civilisation. This civilisation showed the existence of copper-bronze technology, wheel-made pottery, settled agriculture, town planning, measurement and computation techniques. Rigveda of Aryan civilisation gives us the concept of natural law (rta). During this period there were beginnings of calendar system, also the knowledge of diseases and cure, Yajurveda gives us the whole series of 27 or 28 nakshatras; also number-names on the decimal scale up to 10^{12}. Atharvaveda takes this development forward.

In the period of brahmanas, aranyakas and upanishads beginnings of mathematical series are made. This is the period between 1000 and 600 BC. There is more physiological and anatomical knowledge. Production and use of iron comes into being. In agriculture rotation practice is followed to increase fertility.

During the 6th-5th centuries BC codification of medical knowledge into ayurveda takes place. Vaisesika, sankhya, lokayata help the development of physical concepts like atomism, space, time, motion and sound, though naturally in a very primitive and spontaneous form.

From 4th century BC to 4th century AD is a very rich period for the development of various sciences. Caraka and Susruta samhitas are the product of this very period. Tridosa theory is propounded. There is knowledge of physiology, anatomy, pathology and surgical practices of a primitive nature. Possibly under some Babylonian and Greek influences there is recasting of astronomical ideas. Knowledge of motion of planets goes further. Use of bellows in extracting and forging iron is made. Under foreign influence, particularly Roman at Taxila glass objects at a number of places are found.

In the 5th century AD *Nyayabhasya* of Vatsyayana gives impetus to the theory explaining the movement of a body, and views on vision and propagation of sound. In this century Aryabhatta I made great contributions to astronomy. He gave the theory of rotation of earth on its own axis, epicyclic theory of planetary motion, values of π and sines, extraction of cube and square roots, etc.

Varahamihira in the 6th century AD gives a number of chemical processes and elementary forms of plant and animal classification. Brahmagupta is a wellknown name among the astronomers and mathematicians of those times (i.e. 7th-8th centuries AD). He gave the formula for the sum of n terms of arithmetical progression, formula for the volume of a prism etc. *Mahavnidana* of Madhava gave stress on diagnostic methods.

Bhaskara II was also a famous name in astronomy and mathematics. For example he gave the geometric proof of the Pythagorian theorem.

There were detailed alchemical, zoological and botanical works also.

Thus we find that Indian thought and Indian science had been very rich.

But from this we should not draw the conclusion that they were more advanced than modern science and thought. Rather they should be looked upon as stepping stones towards modern developments. At every step they were conditioned by the level of productive forces. The fact they were at a much lower level as compared with today is proved by the fact that in the philosophical controversies it was the example of an earthen pitcher that was used to prove one's contentions. Even when discussing atomistic theory, while explaining the union of two atoms, the vaisesikas used the example of the union of two portions of a pitcher. The conception of the atom was a pure hypothesis and could not be proved, its *existence* could not be shown at that time. This was naturally so because the instruments for this were nonexistent. We should also notice that developments took place mainly in the logical science, e.g. mathematics, or in the science of the macroworld, e.g. astronomy or anatomy. Microworld was unknown, knowledge about which began only in the modern times with the discovery of cells.

Yet within the limits allowed by the level of social development Indians achieved important results. This is precisely what we should value and preserve.

We should also be conversant with the fact that the materialist school had to fight all along for its existence. Its writings and contributions were destroyed by the state whose ideology was idealist. We should not lose sight of the fact that idealism and religion served the state, the exploiting class interest. *Materialism was nerver a state ideology.*

It is the job of Indian Marxists to show all this, to preserve what is useful in Indian philosophy, even in idealist Indian philosophy, and to carry forward the ideological battle against the ideology of the exploiting class to the end.

CENTRAL PARTY EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE CPI.

ANTI-MARXIST FALSIFICATION OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

DEBIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA

Preliminary Remarks: Why Pay Any Attention to the Book?

Howsoever absurd it may be, there is at least nothing new in the claim that vedanta represents the highest stage of philosophical wisdom. A considerable number of books —both academic and nonacademic—are written in India to propagate such an idea. Nor is it difficult to see why this should form a very favourite theme of brahmanical orthodoxy. Vedanta, as this orthodoxy claims, is not a philosophy in the ordinary sense of the term. It is the only philosophy sanctioned by scriptural authority, or it is itself of the nature of direct revelation. Besides the political custodians of brahmanical orthodoxy—the Indian lawgivers—declare that it is the only valid philosophy or the only holy philophy preached by holy men. For such declarations, see *Manusmriti* ii. 160, vi. 83, vi. 94. The accumulation of a superstitious awe about vedanta is not difficult to understand. We shall see that one special feature of *The Universe of Vedanta* is that it wants to add to this awe. In fact its author argues with great gusto that vedanta alone is based on the direct authority of the scriptures, the Indian words for which are *sruti* and *smriti*.

Since the intellectual debris produced in glorification of vedanta include the contributions of ill-informed people, there is nothing unusual either about a book on vedanta being based on the most shallow acquaintance with the relevant philosophical documents. The way in which these persons usually try to conceal their shallowness is a simple

trick. They come out with all sorts of high-sounding phrases and pretend that they represent profoundly new interpretations of certain Sanskrit quotations—often of the nature of stray sentences and half-sentences, taken out of their actual context and denuded of their original significance. Sometimes there is a lot of jargon-mongering sought to be justified by the use of a single Sanskrit word, the real meaning of which is completely ignored. We shall see that our author indulges so much in these hackneyed tricks that the book as a whole becomes some kind of a rigmarole from which it is not even easy to have an idea of what he means by vedanta. We shall also see that even if we manage to do it with much effort, the author's version of vedanta turns out to be different from the vedanta which its accredited founders and exponents wanted us to understand by it.

However, if these were the only features of the book, we could have just ignored it, as we have to ignore the other pseudo-erudite quackeries produced in the name of vedanta. But there are certain reasons that compel us to take serious notice of it. These are:

(1) In the publisher's note, we are told that its author, Bani—alias Vidyadhar L. Deshpande—joined the Communist Party of India in 1948.

(2) The author tells us that he was "very happy when Comrade Dange read my thesis and gladly agreed to write an introduction" (p 57).

(3) S. A. Dange, chairman of the Communist Party of India, actually contributes a foreword to the book, which occupies 15 printed pages—more than one tenth of the actual text. In this foreword, among other things, he says: "The study is guided by the laws of dialectical materialism as given to us by Marx and utilises the material left over by the ancient vedic records and modern understanding of the universe as given by Einstein and developed further by Soviet philosopher-scientists." Further, "Our

revolutionary masses and their revolutionary leaders in the field of politics, science, history, and philosophy have taken up the task of overcoming these inheritances of our feudal and colonial past. And the leadership in this is being taken by Marxist scholars both in India and abroad. This book, in my opinion, is quite an original contribution to discharging that task" (p 2).

(4) The author himself claims that his purpose of writing the book is to serve the revolutionary cause of the Indian working class. Referring to certain Datta Bal, he says: "Having observed how this young idealist in our time was engaged in attacking and corroding the philosophy of the working class and the socialist revolution in the name of vedanta philosophy and modern science, quoting everyone from Marx to Einstein, I was prompted to write exhaustively on the scientific outlook of the vedanta philosophy as I had come to understand it" (p 17).

The facts just mentioned are enough to create the impression of a revolutionary motivation as well as a revolutionary content of the book, authenticated by no less a person than the chairman of the CPI. Yet all this is nothing more than an illusion. The book actually contains:

(1) an absurd fiction backed only by the most extraordinary ignorance of Indian philosophical materials, which its author is pleased to call vedanta and its dialectics;

(2) complete repudiation of the fundamentals of Marxism;

(3) distortion of the significnce of certain statements of Marx, Engels and Lenin;

(4) vilification of the main philosophical and scientific activities now going on in the Soviet Union;

(5) total confusion regarding the Indian philosophical heritage;

(6) glorification of brahmanical orthodoxy and Hindu chauvinism (inclusive of vegetarianism!) to such an

extent as to arouse the envy of even Golwalkar and the RSS ideologists.

These are some of the reasons why the revolutionary pretensions of the book need to be unmasked and its falsification of Marxism, Soviet science and Indian philosophical tradition sharply exposed.

Appalling Lack of Substance

The book pretends to give the impression of some profoundly new interpretation of Indian philosophical materials. To those that have no specialised knowledge of Indian philosophy, this may create some confusion. It is, therefore, necessary first of all to be clear about one point. What is the total stock of Indian philosophical materials with which the author operates? When we analyse the book, this stock is found to be ridiculously poor. Apart from the stray mention of certain Sanskrit words (the meanings of which the author chooses to distort without the least scruple) and ancient legends, the actual philosophical materials that form the real basis of the whole book are as follows:

(a) About 16 fragmentary sentences from the entire Upanisadic literature;

(b) Only four scraps of verses from the *Gita;*

(c) Only one sutra or aphorism from the *Brahmasutra,* which contains 555 sutras;

(d) Only a part of a sentence from Samkara's commentary on the *Brahmasutra,* which in the form of a closely printed modern edition contains 429 pages;

(e) Only a half-verse from the entire *Mahabharata;*

(f) Two verses of the *Samkhyakarika;*

(g) Only 4 sutras from the *Yogasutra,* which contains 195 sutras;

(h) Extracts from Vyasa's commentary on only 7 of these sutras;

(i) Only 4 sentences from a late work called *Yogasarasamgraha;*

(j) Two or three sentences quoted by the author without mentioning their source.

And these are about all. That one can be brave enough to write a serious book on vedanta philosophy depending on such insignificant data is itself incredible. A greater wonder is that even the data just mentioned are not necessarily relevant for discussion of vedanta 'dialectic'. Some of these are clearly irrelevant and some others positively opposed to vedanta philosophy as its authentic exponents want us to understand it. But we shall take up this discussion at a later stage, because if we digress into the technicalities of all these right at the beginning, we may not bring to a sharp focus the horrible repudiation of Marxism which the book fundamentally stands for. The author's stock of Indian philosophical materials is mentioned here only to emphasise one point. Marxists who are not specialists in Indian philosophy need not at all have the impression that from the point of view of the technicalities of Indian philosophy this book may have some substance. It is only by repeating certain quotations over and over again, or by breaking up some quotation into smaller bits and scattering the pieces in different pages of the book—and above all by coming out with ponderous but irrelevant lectures on certain scraps quoted —that the author tries to create the illusion that from the standpoint of Indian philosophy the book may have substance. Pending the exposure of such illusion, let us first see some prominent features of the book which make it so poisonous for the Indian working class.

Our Author and Golwalkar

Our author says: "Vedanta philosophy, as we have already seen, had developed into a complete philosophical system in India and had reached the apex of human thinking more than three or four thousand years ago. It was for this reason that *all the philosophers of the west, without exception, ancient or modern, were so much influenced*

and inspired by the vedanta philosophy, and *Marx, Engels and Lenin,* who stood head and shoulders above all the modern philosophers also *felt so much enamoured by it as to freely recommend its investigation and research*" (p 154, emphasis added).

Referring to the vedas and upanisads in particular, he repeats: "As Marx and Engels have pointed out, they are the fountainhead of all the knowledge that travelled to the whole world in course of time" (p 159).

He says: "Thus, while the vedanta philosophy lay deeply submerged in the ignorance of the Indians, Karl Marx with his own great genius and brilliant originality once again unfurled the flag of the vedanta over the world" (p 152).

We shall presently see how many times he repeats his fundamental thesis that the vedanta philosophy is immensely superior to that of Karl Marx and that Marx could not have been what he was without the ultimate basis of ancient Indian wisdom, particularly vedanta.

But let us first concentrate on the two major points of the passages just quoted. These are: (a) The apex of wisdom was already reached in ancient India, specially in vedanta; (b) not to speak of the other western philosophers who are one and all inspired by it, even Marx, Engels and Lenin are greatly "enamoured" of it and considered it as the "fountainhead" of all subsequent philosophical knowledge.

Of these two points, at least the first one is not very original. Basically the same thing is already claimed by M. S. Golwalkar. As he puts it: "At the very outset let it be clear that it is not the modern thinkers who are the first in the field to think in terms of world unity and universal welfare. Long long ago, in fact long before the socalled modern age had set in, the seers and savants of this land delved deep into this vital question" (*Bunch of Thoughts*, p 2).

What is actually original about our author is the second

point, a point which Golwalkar did not dare to propagate. It is dragging in even Marx, Engels and Lenin to preach what Golwalkar preaches. If Marx himself unfurled the flag of vedanta over the world, if Marx and Engels insisted that the vedas and upanisads contain the fountainhead of all subsequent knowledge, if Marx, Engels and Lenin were themselves greatly enamoured of vedanta philosophy, what is the Indian working class supposed to do? To have the greatest respect for vedas and upanisads and for the vedanta philosophy? But that is precisely what the traditional Indian lawgivers like Manu, the political custodians of brahmanical orthodoxy, wanted to enforce. What our author propagates amounts to the surest ship-wreck of the Indian workingclass movement.

But let us return to the author's tall claims. Two questions inevitably arise about these. First, how does he substantiate his claim that all the philosophers of the west, without exception, were greatly influenced and inspired by vedanta? Second, what is the source of his information that Marx, Engels and Lenin were much enamoured of the vedanta? For the Marxists themselves, the second question is much more important, though they cannot be indifferent to the first.

We begin with the first of these two questions. It gives us some idea of the kind of howlers and distortions of facts our author is capable of. As for "all the philosophers of the west without exception, ancient and modern" supposed to be inspired and influenced by vedanta, he mentions only three throughout his book: (1) Pythagoras, (2) Kant and (3) Hegel.

On the authority of V. Subramaniya Sastri, he takes it for granted that Pythagoras was the pupil of a brahmin guru (p. 28). Apart from the virtue of vegetarianism (pp 28 & 142), which he is supposed to have learnt from this guru and introduced to the west, his great importance in the history of philosophy consists in this that "until Pythagoras appeared on the scene of Greek

history, the Greeks did not know what philosopher or philosophy meant" (p 41). Apparently he got this concept from his brahmin guru, for the word philosophy, which he was the first to use, was coined from some Indian word. "Thus we see that the word philosopher appears to have been coined from the Greek word 'philo' meaning the 'lover' (of the ultimate truth) or the original Sanskrit word 'phala' meaning the fruit of the knowledge or the ultimate truth..." (p 41). But this is not the limit of the howler, Our author continues.

"That Pythagoras was a pupil of a brahmin guru is further established by the theorem of geometry which has been named after him in Euclid's geometry. If Pythagoras was the discoverer of this great and complicated theorem of geometry, one is surprised as to why he could not give any other theorem even of more simpler nature. That his knowledge of geometry was limited to only one single theorem, viz in a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides of the triangle and its corollaries clearly suggests that he had learnt this single theorem and its extensions from his brahmin guru. The reason of his knowledge of a single theorem was this. In the ancient India, every brahmin was supposed to possess the knowledge of this theorem and its corollaries as part of the yajna ritual for making the *agni chayana* or vedi and it should be noted that this is clearly explained in the *Shulvasutra* or the science of geometry, centuries before Pythagoras learnt it. Pythagoras may only have shown this calculation to his countrymen which was subsequently compiled in his name" (pp 41-42).

Anybody knowing anything about the actual contribution of Pythagoras to ancient Greek science and philosophy would not write like this.

The second western philosopher mentioned by our author as being influenced by vedanta was Kant. He says: "In the 17th century Kant has himself said that he has

drawn inspiration from the study of upanisads in Latin (p 29).

Since Kant was born in 1724 and died in 1804, he could not have belonged to the 17th century. And Kant could not have said that he was influenced by Latin translation of the upanisads, because these were published after his death. What our author seems to be referring to is his complete lack of digestion of the following: "These upanisads had been translated in the 17th century into Persian by the brother of Aurangzeb, the unfortunate prince Mohammed-Dara Shakoh, the son of the great Mogul Shah Jehan. From the Persian they were translated into Latin at the beginning of the 19th century by the French scholar Anquetil du Perron under the title *Oupnek'hat*. Imperfect and full of misinterpretations as the Latin translation was, it has become of importance for the history of learning through the fact that the German philosophers Schelling, and specially Schopenhauer, became enhusiastic for Indian philosophy by means of this book (Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, p 19).

These are the facts presented by our author as proofs of Kant's admiration for the upanisads at a time when Kant was not born. Indeed, facts are not the strong points about his comments on history. He bravely talks of "the Ionian king Alexander came to India" (p 27), when the fact is that he was not an Ionian but a Macedonian king. Again, he talks of "the Ionic Greeks about 4th century BC" being followed by Heraclitus (540-480 BC) and so on (pp 61-62).

But let us return to his western philosophers admiring vedanta. Outside Marx, Engels and Lenin, the third such philosopher mentioned by him is Hegel. As he puts it, "Hegel, though he does not say so, had read the vedanta philosophy of Shankaracharya and, therefore, must have read his perfect dialectics, the theory of contradiction, the negation of negation, the quantitative and qualitative change, the theory of the indivisibility of cause and effect in the process of the development from the eternity to

infinity and which is the very basis of Shankaracharaya's philosophy. But Hegel reconstructs his dialectic from the crude and naive dialectic of Aristotle" (pp 29-30).

We shall later see that what is said here about the philosophy of Samkara is plain nonsense—a circumstance that perhaps prevents our author to quote anything from Samkara beyond a broken sentence. But we are at the moment concerned with what he says of Hegel. From the quotation, we are left to wonder whether Hegel was a fool or a knave: he knew the perfect dialectics of Samkara and yet preferred to reconstruct his own dialectic from the crude and naive dialectic of Aristotle!

In any case, our author is very eager to tell us that the Hegelian dialectic, on which Marx is known to depend so much was a very crude one. Hence he repeats, "At the same time, it can also be conclusively proved that the vedic thinking after more than two thousand years reached Marx through Aristotle and Hegel although in a very crude form because of their inability to understand the way the Indian thinkers had developed it" (pp 49-50). And again: "Hegel did not understand the dialectical process as scientifically as only the vedic thinkers and Marx could understand. We shall, however, discuss in the *Dialectics of Vedanta* how unscientific is the dialectic of Hegel who is called today the greatest dialectician and the founder-father of that doctrine in the world by western philosophers and historians" (p 72).

In view of the well-known statements of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the readers may be readily inclined to include them in the group of those deluded western philosophers and historians who admire the dialectic of Hegel so much. But our author would not agree to this. He is not prepared to tolerate any adverse comment on Marx, Engels and Lenin, because—unlike Golwalkar who preaches hindu chauvinism without any veil on it—our author drags Marx, Engels and Lenin to preach hindu chauvinism. That is why he claims that Marx, Engels and Lenin were greatly enamoured of vedanta.

For the Marxists themselves, this point is too important to be lightly viewed. We have to discuss this in some detail.

How Marx, Engels and Lenin Are Made to Preach Vedanta

Nowhere in the book is quoted any statement of Marx. Engels and Lenin in substantiation of the claim that they were greatly enamoured of vedanta. How then does our author make such a fantastic claim? He pretends to have three trump cards in his pocket. One of these is a very well-known quotation from Engels showing the antiquity of the religious ideas recorded in the vedas. The second is an oral communication of Lenin emphasising the importance of the knowledge of Indian history even for the Russian working class. The third is a bitter satire of Marx on the hypocrisy of the Indian brahmins who want to prove the holiness of the vedas. To these three quotations our author adds very long sermons of his own, which are finally summed up by him as proofs that these three revolutionaries were enamoured of vedanta. This is the limit of the unscrupulous distortion of the actual sayings of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The first quotation is a very well-known passage from Engels's *Anti-Duhring*. Before quoting it, our author triumphantly observes, "F. Engels himself writes that" (p 37). And what does Engels write? As our author quotes him:

"All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in man's minds of those externl forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces. In the beginnings of history it was the forces of nature which were first so reflected and which in the course of further evolution underwent the most varied personifications among the various peoples. This early process has been traced back by comparative mythology, at least in the

case of the Indo-European peoples, to its origin in the Indian vedas and in its further evolution it has been demonstrated in detail among the Indians. Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germans and so far as material is available, also among the Celts, Lithuanians and Slavs."

After quoting this passage, our author comes out with a very pompous lecture running through one printed page, showing his indignation against some adversary who is supposed to deny the antiquity of the vedas and for whose slave mentality, the "talk of Herodotus, Aristotle, Epicurus or Hegel is a symbol of status and modernism while to talk of Badarayan Vyas, Patanjali or Shankaracharya has become a symbol of not only backwardness but even of obscurantism and national chauvinism" (p 38).

It is not easy to understand from the book itself the adversary against whom the author is showing such indignation. Since however we are not aware of any serious scholar contesting the basic points of Engels in the above quotation, the indignation of the author does not concern us. What concerns us is the main point of Engels. It is that the Indian vedas are for us the earliest literary record of how certain natural forces are ignorantly deified as supernatural forces—a process which, according to Engels, is the very basic of the formation of religion.

But is there anything in this passage to show that Engels is enamoured of vedanta philosophy? Obviously not. Nor is there any indication of Lenin being enamoured of vedanta in the second trump card. It is a quotation of Lenin's oral communication. Since the quotation is taken by our author from the book of the Soviet philosopher N. P. Anikeev, honesty demands that we quote it again along with the context in which Anikeev quotes it. Here is what Anikeev writes:

"The Marxist scholars start from the principle that the past history of all countries, especially of such ancient lands like India, are uninterruptedly interlinked with the present history and the study of the past is necessary to understand the present and move forward to the future.

"What is more significant is that the study of ancient culture is an urgent necessity for promoting the cause of the toiling classes. Even in the early days of the Soviet power, Lenin emphasised the importance of the study of ancient cultures, specially the culture of India. In his conversations with S. F. Oldenburg, Lenin said: 'Well, here is your subject. It seems far away. Yet it is close. Go to the masses, to the workers, and tell them about the history of India... and see how they will respond to it. And you yourself... draw inspiration from it for fresh research work and study of great scientific importance' " (*Modern Ideological Struggle for the Ancient Philosophical Heritage of India,* pp 60-61).

Our author drops the context in which the Soviet philosopher puts Lenin's quotation and thereby hopes to convert Lenin into a preacher of vedanta.

The third quotation used by our author is from Marx. In 1842, Marx comes out with the following bitter satire against Karl Heinrich Hermes—a supporter of the catholic church against protestantism and a secret agent of the Prussian government. Said Marx: "If, of course, you acknowledge beforehand as scientific research only what conforms to your own view, it is not difficult for you to make prophecies; but then what advantage has your assertion over that of the Indian brahmin who proves the holiness of the vedas by reserving for himself alone the right to read it" (*On Religion,* pp 24-25).

Before quoting these words, our author says, "More than hundred years ago, Karl Marx left a message for the Indian intellectuals who talked high of their heritage; but few seem to have taken note of that message" (p 51). But what exactly is this message? It is surely not to have faith in the holiness of the vedas. It is on the contrary not to have any faith in the hypocritical brahmins who want to prove the holiness of the vedas by forbidding others to read the vedas. In any case there is nothing in this quotation to show Marx's admiration for the vedas or even any slight hint that he was enamoured of vedanta.

We have discussed these three quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin because these are the only quotations from them used by our author in the book that have any bearing on the vedas and on the importance of the research in Indian history. We are thus left to presume that the author's assertion that Marx, Engels and Lenin were greatly "enamoured" of vedanta philosophy and that Marx and Engels pointed out that the vedas and upanisads etc. are "the fountainhead of all knowledge that travelled to the whole world in course of time"—are supposed to be based on these evidences. The other alternative is to think that the author's assertion is a plain hoax with which he wants to create confusion among Marxists.

Here is another example of how unscrupulously our author uses the name of Engels for proving his own hindu chauvinism. He claims that "the great merit of vedanta philosophy was that even diametrically opposite schools like idealist and materialist peacefully coexisted in Indian history", etc. etc. (p 22). As authority for this, he cites in the footnote: "F. Engels's introduction to *Dialectics of Nature*". But the fact is that in this introduction, Engels has nothing to say about India and Indian philosophy.

How Soviet Scientists Are Made to Testify to the Distortion of Marxism

As if not satisfied with making Marx, Engels and Lenin the preachers of a Golwalkar type of hindu chauvinism, our author tries to trick of making the Soviet scientists testify to his distortion of Marxism. Let us first see how he distorts Marxism. We shall next see how he pretends to depend on the Soviet scientists for this purpose.

Our author argues that the real contributions of Marx and Lenin, like those Einstein, are the results of "intuition" —though not intuition without knowledge but intuition based on knowledge. As he puts it,

"In other words intuition based on knowledge alone can create the genius like Marx, Einstein, Lenin or the ancient

thinkers of India and Greece. Let us try to understand it this way. Einstein's great discovery of the deflection of starlight in the gravitational field of the sun, or Marx's intuition for the development of the theory of historical materialism and surplus value or Lenin's intuition in the discovery of the theory of revolution are examples of correct and brilliant intuitions proved by history. But if Einstein had not studied physics, Marx had not read Hegel's dialectics or Lenin had not understood the philosophy of Marx, then any amount of intuition in the world would have been meaningless" (p 47).

So Marx's theory of historical materialism and surplus value, like Lenin's theory of revolution, are nothing but "brilliant intuitions", which, whatever these mean, excludes revolutionary practice and class struggle. Can any honest Marxist argue like this? What makes the view particularly pernicious is the author's explanation of "intuition".

What then is this "intuition"? It is something which, according to our author, is best attained by yoga. There is nothing unusual about such a claim taken by itself, for we know that there are many charlatans in our country who claim this. What is sinister about our author is that he drags in the Soviet scientists to justify the claim. Following are some of his observation on this point.

"The Russian scientists have also accepted the existence of the phenomenon of intuition, which has been wrongly understood by all the idealists of the world as a phenomenon of extrasensory perception (ESP) . . . In my articles on yoga I have proved it as the highest perfection of vedic dialectics known as *brahma-vidya* or the science of 'the greatest and highest knowledge' " (pp 44-45).

"Once the phenomenon of intuition is understood, modern science will be struck with horror to face many inexplicable mysteries of our universe, of human body, its structure and function. Because intuition is not just a means to superior knowledge as modern science is trying to believe. Such knowledge arises in the earlier stages of intuition. But in the higher stages many faculties develop

in the sensory organs and our body which are lying dormant and normally unknown to human experience which Patanjali has explained and science alone will have to investigate" (p 48).

Much to the joy of our author, the Soviet scientists have started investigating this, though of course they would perform better if they agree to follow the footsteps of Patanjali more faithfully. Thus:

"The Soviet scientists deserve all commendation for establishing new branch of science known as psychotronics, meaning the science of investigating the mystic powers of mind and body which, as the Soviet scientists say, 'will change our lives'. They are studying how it is possible for a human being to influence another being, living thing or material object, without any contact except through the mind'. With due respect to the modern science, it should be noted that yoga itself is the science of the powers of mind and body and the ancient Indians having acquired and explained it never called it mystic...

"Hence in all fairness to the ancient founder-scientist like Patanjali, modern times could as well call it yogatronics instead of psychotronics in accordance with the established practice of borrowing the root for every new science from the ancient Greek terminology" (pp 48-49).

If the author mentions this as indicative of the general drift of Soviet science and philosophy, there is no doubt that he is telling a lie. The simple fact is that some years back about a handful of Soviet philosophers showed a tendency to take yoga more seriously than scientific curiosity allows. But this tendency is now officially discouraged as unscientific in the Soviet Union. I myself had long discussion on the subject with the friends working in the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences, USSR, and they fully agreed with me that wrong enthusiasm about yoga shown some years back by a few philosophers in the USSR had been of the nature of misfortune.

Incidentally, our author brings in the Soviet scientists again to confirm his absurd viwe of vedic chronology, for

which the Indian mythological literature—the puranas—are for his the most authoritative sources. He argues: "Sambh, Krishna's son, personally helped the migration of brahmins from the area of the present Soviet Central Asian Republics then called Shaka-Dweep and settled them in Sambapur in India somewhere in the kingdom of the Yadavas. These references are indisputable facts of history... Lord Buddha who is called a *Shakaputra* or *Shakavanshi* meaning the son of Shaka people or belonging to the Shaka-clan proves that these people originally belonged to Shaka-Dweep or Central Asia as stated by *Vishnu-Purana*" (pp 32-33). Following the threads of such unutterable trash, our author comes out with his dating of the Rigveda. Thus:

"Without going into any details of the Indian chronology, the writer of the *Vishnu-Purana* has accurately calculated for us the period of India's antiquity. According to it, Rama lived about thirtytwo generations before the Mahabharat war and King Sagar of the Suryavansha has been placed fiftyfive generations before that war. This means that the period of Rama should be about 1200 years to 1300 years before the Mahabharat and King Sagar to be at least about 2200 years. Taking into consideration the period of the Mahabharat war, *Vishnu-Purana* directly establishes the known and recorded antiquity of India at least by a minimum period of 7500 years. *Vishnu-Purana* further informs us that the people of Shaka-Dweep were learned and greatly civilised and they knew all the four vedas although in a *distorted* form. Latest excavations carried out by the Soviet scientists in the Central Asian Republics lead them to believe that in the ancient times the people of this region were very civilised. *Vishnu-Purana* only confirms the findings of the Soviet scientists. This means that the period of the composition of Rigveda-suktas, the most ancient among the four vedas, preserved through the word of mouth for thousands of years can safely be said to be anywhere about 10,000 years or more as many Indian historians correctly tend to think" (pp 36-37).

That such muck can at all be written defies the credulity of any serious student of ancient Indian history. And how will the Soviet archaeologists themselves take it, when they actually claim that their excavations in the Central Asian Republics have unearthed mainly relics of the Kushan period?

Our author is not satisfied only with the past chronology. He makes the ancient Indian sages also foretell the future and predict the exact date of the transition to socialism and communism. Believe it or not, this can be found on pp 149-50, which it would be tiring to quote here at length.

Vedanta Immensely Superior to Marxism

But let us leave history and turn to philosophy. What, from the philosophical point of view, is the main thesis of our author? It is in brief the superiority of vedanta to all other philosophies inclusive of Marxism. Let us first see how many times and in how many ways he repeats this:

"It is my firm opinion that the *Geeta* as the quintessence of the ancient vedanta philosophy is based on the doctrine of dialectics which was unknown to the west until Marx could explain it in the nineteenth century and in its higher development is still unknown even in the twentieth century" (p 25).

"Hence I say that the ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached" (p 30).

"Hence one must remember that the dialectical outlook, its philosophy and laws are not the creation of Marx, Hegel or Aristotle. It was already a fully developed concept in India long before the early Greeks who apparently themselves appear to be picking up the threads of all the Indian schools of philosophy in the same order as the Indians developed them" (p 40).

"What is new for us to understand is that vedanta philosophy is the first pre-Marxist philosophy in the world, which in the course of thousands of years developed into a scientific outlook . . . it is amusing to see in it not only the foundation of Marxism but the dialectical philosophy of Marx itself as a brilliant further development of vedanta philosophy and its highly scientific world-outlook . . ." (p 49).

"It is at once incredible by any norm of human intelligence to believe the genius of Kapila until we come to the nineteeth century to hear Marx explain it and until we try to understand vedanta philosophy correctly" (p 66).

Referring to an aphorism of the *Yogasutra* (which, as we shall see, is irrelevant for understanding vedanta), the author exclaims: "The sutra of Patanjali which should be rightly considered the greatest feat of scientific thinking and which runs like a silver thread throughout the fabric of vedanta philosophy, after thousands of years once again assumed great world significance when Karl Marx literally repeated it" (pp 72-73).

"The vedic thinkers laid down a perfect and scientific theory for every law which they evolved, and with the same language and depth of understanding as modern science can explain, though without the experimental basis evolved by the development of natural sciences of our time" (p 73).

"I have also no hesitation to say that but for that, Kapila's discovery of the greatest of all the sciences of the world viz. his discovery of the dialectical philosophy and its scientific world-outlook, perhaps may never have been known to Marx and the world today could have been without it" (p 155).

The Only Philosophy with Scriptural Sanction

More quotations on the supreme importance of vedanta dialectic are not necessary. But it is impossible to avoid one question in this connection. If our author is really serious about Marxism and about dialectics in ancient

Indian thought, why does he so carefully avoid the only reference to ancient Indian dialectic which we come across in the Marxist classics? In his *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels says,

"On the other hand, dialectical thought—precisely because it presupposes investigation of the nature of concepts themselves—is only possible for man, and for him only at a comparatively high stage of development (buddhists and Greeks) and it attains its full development much later still through modern philosophy—and yet we have the colossal results already among the Greeks" (p 226).

Thus, according to Engels, dialectical thought was not unknown in ancient India; it is to be found among the buddhists. To our author, however, this is obviously unpalatable, for he is convinced that because of a wrong notion about vedanta "western and Indian scholars appear to be vigorously searching for some rational and scientific thinking in the non-vedic philosophies such as buddhism etc." (p 24). Elsewhere he says, though Buddha and Mahavira had wisdom enough to preach vegetarianism they were "without its scientific dialectical theory" (pp 142-43).

But why is this anxiety to deny dialectics in buddhism where it is most prominent in Indian philosophical heritage? One reason for this is that our author is not prepared to allow full philosophical status to buddhism, because it does not have scriptural sanction in the sense of brahmanical orthodoxy. That somebody with Marxist pretensions is capable of claiming this is difficult to believe. But this is his actual position. He says:

"In short, therefore, it is said that those who accept the authority of the *shruti* and *smruti* texts meaning the vedas and upanisads, belong to the vedanta school in general, because these texts contain nothing but profound and exhaustive philosophical discussions on the origin and development of the universe... Hence it would be clear that the distinction between idealist and materialist school in vedanta is of no consequence until the basic authority of the shruti and smruti texts is recognised however

contradictory they may be and even for contradictory purposes. As a logical consequence of this, it should be remembered that the words *astik...* and *nastik...* only stand for belief or nonbelief in the shruti and smruti texts" (p 21).

Must one stoop so low as to argue with an author who does not even know that the word he uses is not *smruti* but *smriti*? Must one stoop so low as to argue with one who declares that *sruti* and *smriti* mean vedas and upanisads, when the elementary fact is that only *sruti* or direct revelation stands for vedas and upanisads, while *smriti* means scriptures of secondary order—primarily the law-codes of Manu and others. It is surely a shame to read that the texts of vedas and upanisads "contain nothing but profound and exhaustive philosophical discussions on the origin and development of the universe", when the fact is that even the upanisads which contain proto-philosophical discussions are also full of all sorts of the relics of primitive beliefs having nothing to do with the discussion of the origin of the universe. These assertions of the author are below the level of discussion and criticism. But it needs to be told to the readers that the concepts *astika* and *nastika* in Indian philosophy are not the creations of the Indian philosophers and philologists but of Manu, the law-giver, who wanted to brand all philosophies as heretical until these pledged loyalty to the scriptures. Even the ancient grammarian Panini used the words in different senses. Our author is completely ignorant of all this and he simply shouts that unless a philosophy accepts the authority of the scriptures in the brahmanical sense, it is not a philosophy at all. Can such a thing be at all said by a real friend of the Indian working class, for which the diktats of the traditional lawgivers are still obstacles to real progress?

What is Vedanta?

But what is vedanta, about the dialectics of which our author has so much to shout? His own idea of it is most

extraordinarily muddled. Before passing on to examine it, it may be useful to be clear about the actual meaning of vedanta, which its accredited exponents wanted us to accept.

Vedanta literally means veda-end (*veda+anta*), i.e. the upanisads, which Indian tradition views as forming the ending portions of the vedas (i.e. the vast samhita-brahmana-aranyaka-upanisad literature). Apart from various other things, certain philosophical and proto-philosophical questions are actually discussed in the upanisads, though in a manner which is far from being systematic. In the course of time, the need was felt to systematise these philosophical discussions and to evolve a monolithic view from the chaotic mass of upanisadic speculations. This was done in a work called the *Brahmasutra,* which is attributed to Badarayana. This work consists of cryptic sentences and half-sentences, amenable to divergent interpretations. There eventually emerged various schools of vedanta philosophy primarily as different interpretations of the *Brahmasutra.* Among these, the most famous are advaita and visistadvaita, associated mainly with the names of Samkara and Ramanuja respectively. Already during the time of the composition of the *Brahmasutra* different rival philosophies acquired prominence in India, as a result of which the need was felt to refute these in the *Brahmasutra.* Following the text, all the schools of vedanta philosophy refuted these rival views. Buddhism apart, the main rival philosophies refuted in the *Brahmasutra* and in all these schools of vedanta are: samkhya, yoga, nyaya and vaisesika (though, as I have elsewhere tried to show, these philosophies also made formal declarations about the acceptance of the scriptural authority for the only purpose of evading the censorship of the Indian lawgivers).

To sum up: Vedanta basically means the upanisads. The first systematic work on it is the *Brahmasutra.* Mainly as interpretations of this text, there eventually emerge

various schools of vedanta, all of which reject samkhya, yoga, nyaya and vaisesika.

With these points in mind, let us see what our author has to say about vedanta.

He says: "Vedanta philosophy consists of many schools, such as nyaya, vaisesika, samkhya, yoga and advaita" (p 20). Must we discuss philosophy with one who is so ignorant as to claim that, like advaita samkhya, yoga, nyaya and vaisesika are also schools of vedanta?

But our author does not stick to this idea of vedanta.

He says: "Hence my purpose is to first establish the scientific foundation of the vedanta philosophy, then its dialectical doctrine, irrespective of the idealist or materialist form, as propounded in the vedanta philosophy in the *Brahmasutra* of Badarayana, in the *Yogasutra* of Patanjali, and mahabhashyam or commentaries of Vyasa and Shankaracharya" (p 54). Thus, he leaves nyaya vaisesika and samkhya and wants to stick only to Badarayana-Samkara and Patanjali-Vyasa as authentic exponents of vedanta. He repeats: "I have explained how to understand the dialectics of the vedanta philosophy mainly on the basis of the *Brahmasutra* of Badarayana and Patanjali, Vyasa and Shankaracharya" (p 56). He again says, "Thus we see that Badarayana in his *Brahmasutra* and every ancient vedic philosopher like Patanjali. Vyasa, Panini to Shankaracharya had declared that the laws of dialectics..." (p 71). Here he adds Panini, though it is well-known that Madhava in the *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* treats Panini's philosophy, as a separate system altogether.

But let us confine ourselves to his main assumptions. From his repeated assertions as well as his use of quotations in the book it is obvious that his main authorities for vedanta philosophy are Badarayana and Samkara on the one hand and the exponents of yoga like Patanjali and Vyasa on the other. But the question is: What have Badarayana and Samkara to say about the yoga of Patanjali and Vyasa?

An oft-quoted sutra of the *Brahmasutra* declares: "By this is (also) refuted yoga philosophy" (Br. Su. ii.1.3.). Commenting on it. Samkara said, "This sutra extends the application of the preceding argumentation and remarks that by the refutation of the samkhya, the yoga also is considered to be refuted; for the latter also assumes, in opposition to scripture, primeval matter (*pradhana*) as the independent cause of the world, and the *mahat* etc. as its effects, although neither the veda nor common experience favour these views".

But, asks Samkara, if the arguments refuting samkhya also refute the yoga, why is the need of a separate sutra to say this? Answering this question, Samkara clarifies the vedanta position with regard to yoga. Yoga, he says, means primarily two things: (1) certain practices conducive to wisdom, and (2) a theoretical or philosophical outlook, which is the same as that of the samkhya. The upanisads speak favourably of the former. Lest however that create the illusion that the upanisad or vedanta also approves of the latter. Badarayana writes this sutra to emphasise that the philosophical outlook associated with yoga—i.e. the samkhya view of Kapila—is to be rejected from the vedantic standpoint.

We have clarified this attitude of vedanta to yoga because it is of crucial importance for the purpose of understanding the emptiness of the main thesis of our author. He talks so much about vedanta dialectics being superior to that of Hegel and Marx. But none of the authentic vedanta texts that he quotes has really anything to do with any dialecical outlook at all, not to speak of a very advanced form of it. The main stock of philosophical material used by him in substantiation of vedanta dialectic, are certain scraps of samkhya philosophy, which can also be found in the *Yogasutra* and the commentary on it, because the *Yogasutra* accepts samkhya as its theoretical basis. But we have just seen that from the authentic standpoint of vedanta as expounded in the *Brahmasutra* and Samkara's commentary on it, this theoretical basis of

yoga—i.e. the samkhya philosophy—is a completely erroneous view.

But let us for the present return to the author's concept of vedanta. We have seen that from the standpoint of genuine vedanta the claim that like advaita—nyaya, vaisesika, samkhya and yoga are all schools of vedanta is without any sense. So also is our author's claim to reconstruct vedanta dialectics from the theoretical position of the *Yogasutra* and Vyasa's commentary on it. But the author has a much greater surprise for us.

He declares: "In Indian history, long before the advent of Buddha, creative thinking of vedanta philosophy had ceased because of historical conditions and hence the philosophy became a dogma of mere rituals in the hands of the later ignorant brahmins" (p 43). This means that Badarayana and Samkara, Patanjali and Vyasa—our author's greatest authorities of vedanta—all belonged to a period before the Buddha. Does our author want us to swallow complete nonsense like this? He does, at least partially. He claims that the *Brahmasutra* of Badarayana cannot be later than 1400 B.C. (p 26). Was it an intuition, then, that led Badarayana to foresee the future development of the schools of buddhist philosophy and to refute them in advance? Or is our author simply unaware of the fact that Badarayana—and following him Samkara also—want to refute the buddhist philosophy in their major forms?

Acquaintance with the Indian philosophical literature is surely not the strong point of our author. Instead of being bothered by these, he comes out with a final definition of vedanta which amounts to the assertion that the name stands for absolute or ultimate truth. After claiming that what Heisenberg says on contemporary physics is already said by vedanta, he comments: "the ancient vedic philosophers also came to the same conclusion when they named their school of investigation and analysis as *veda* and *anta* meaning the end of knowledge" (p 117).

So vedanta means the end of knowledge—the ultimate

and absolute truth—i.e. precisely that which, according to Engels, the dialectical outlook is intended to scrap. Referring to the dialectical outlook, Engels says, "it once for all dealt the death blow to the finality of all products of human thought and action" (*Ludwig Feuerbach,* p 11).

Endless Distortion of Indian Philosophy

It is extremely tedious to try to prepare a catalogue of the almost endless distortions of Indian philosophical materials in the book. Lest however the reader may have the illusion that the author has at least some footing in the Indian philosophical traditions, it is necessary to mention here at least some of the statements whch are either the results of total ignorance or of the most determined distortions of facts.

The author declares that the great sage Yajnavalkya defeated all his philosophical rivals, who were idealists (pp 23 & 115). This is a plain lie. The upanisads describe him as the greatest idealist philosopher of the age, for whom the ultimate reality is "just a mass of consciousness" (vijnana-ghana), and who, in defence of this extreme idealism, defeats all his philosophical rivals, including some—like Uddalaka Aruni—who, if not materialists in the modern sense, are at least proto-materialists of the age.

The author mentions three women—Gargi, Maitreyi and Katyayani—as 'the most brilliant and learned philosophers recorded by any history" (p 23). The fact, however, is that in the upanisads though Gargi is described as taking part in some sort of speculative debate; and Maitreyi as interested in the secret wisdom of Yajnavalkya; Katyayani is mentioned only in one legend, and that simply as one of the two wives of Yajnavalkya, among whom the philosopher wants to have his property settled before retirement.

The author says, "the advaita philosopher with unique ingenuity, invented the *vivarta* and proved its existence on

the basis of the laws of dialectics" (p 20). The fact however is that the advaita view of *vivarta* is about the most complete repudiation of the dialectical outlook that we have in Indian philosophy. Since our author does not say what it means and simply tries to create an awe about it, we may as well see what this concept actually implies. In the advaita view, brahman in the sense of pure consciousness is the only reality. The material world cannot have any cause other than the brahman. But how is this causation of the world to be understood? Is it to be understood in the sense of real transformation of the cause into the effect. as for example the transformation of milk into curd? In Indian philosophy such real transformation is called *parinama* and the samkhya philosophers accept it when they argue that the world as we know it is the real transformation of primeval matter or *prakrti*. It is however absolutely fatal for the advaita philosophers to admit that their *brahman* or pure consciousness is really transformed (*parinama*) into the material world. Hence they invent the concept of *vivarta*, which means something like illusory transformation or the illusion of a transformation. The typical example with which this is illustrated is the snake-rope illusion. The rope is the cause of the snake seen in the illusory experience; but this does not mean that the rope is really transformed into the snake. What actually takes place is the illusion of a transformation or some kind of illusory transformation—*vivarta*. So also is the world caused by *brahman*. This means, we have only the illusion of a world which does not actually come into being. Our author is of course extremely indignant of those who think that in the advaita philosophy the world is an illusion. He says, "It is the erroneous translation of the words *maya* and *mithya* as an illusion that the vedanta philosophy has been subjected to the ridicule of everyone" (p 156). He does not tell us however what is the right translation of these words. And since all the advaita philosophers from Samkara to Sriharsa propagate the theory

that the world is an illusion, no amount of moral indignation against this understanding of their philosophy can alter the fact of Indian history. Further, since the main drift of the *vivarta* concept is to deny the reality of change and movement, advaita philosophy cannot but be taken as the effort to completely disown the dialectical outlook.

Our author quotes the upanisadic Yajnavalkya as declaring: *vijnanamanandam brahma* (p 151). The plain meaning of this is that the ultimate reality or brahman is consciousness (*vijnana*) and bliss (*ananda*). But our author interprets it as implying "that the real pleasure of life lies in the scientific investigation of the universe in the pursuit of knowledge". It is too much to believe that one dares to write a book on Indian philosophy without knowing that in Indian philosophical tradition the word *vijnana* does not stand for science: it means idea or consciousness. That is why the subjective idealists among the buddhists are known as vijnanavadins, i.e. those according to whom ideas and ideas alone are real.

Our author says, "the methodoology adopted by the vedic thinkers in their philosophical approach was the same which modern science had to adopt in the field of natural sciences... Having prepared the groundwork for a methodic approach, they reduced the elements to particles and then to forces and in the final analysis reduced everything to energy in its essentially eternal and active form which they visualised and expressed in the word chaitanya" (p 137). This is really the limit! He wants us to believe that *caitanya* (spelled as *chaitanya*) means "energy" in the sense of modern science, when the simple fact is that it means "consciousness". The author is indeed so anxious to conceal the idealism of vedanta that he does not stop short of distorting the meaning of the word *caitanya* and goes on bragging: "Modern science having reduced the whole existence to the concept of mass and energy, to its equivalence and interchangeability and having proved that mass is concentrated energy, fully confirms the philosophical explanation of the vedic thinkers that the whole

existence from the smallest atom to the biggest celestial body represented only the manifestation of an indestructible energy which they called chaitanya and which was *anadi* and *ananta* i.e. eternal and infinite" (p 138).

The Fiction of Vedanta Dialectic

We have already mentioned the total stock of Indian philosophical materials with which our author operates. Let us now see how far this proves any dialectical outlook—advanced or rudimentary—in vedanta. For this purpose, we classify his total stock of quotations mainly in three groups:

Group A: (1) About 16 fragments from the upanisads, inclusive of those that have practically become part of the common vocabulary of an average educated Indian, like: "all this is nothing but *brahman*", "(reality) is one without a second", "I am brahman", "That thou art" etc. Such passages are indicative of a tendency to arrive at a monistic view no doubt, though the upanisadic thinkers usually give an idealist twist to their monism by identifying their *brahman* with the soul. Besides these there is one upanisadic fragment which our author quotes four times (pp 53, 66, 68 &113) and on which he wants to put a great deal of emphasis for the reconstruction of vedanta dialectics. It means, "How can being be born from the nonbeing?" We shall presently see its significance for the dialectical view.

(2) Only one half sentence from Samkara's commentary on the *Brahmasutra*, which means: "Thus the nondifference of the effect from the cause" (quoted on p 70).

(3) Only one aphorism from the *Brahmasutra* (quoted on p 113), which means, "Because on the origin of the subsequent (moment), the preceding one ceases to be."

Group B: (1) 4 half-verses from the *Gita*.

(2) One half-verse from the *Mahabharata*, practically repeating what is already said in fragment of the *Gita* quoted.

(3) Two quotations the sources of which are not mentioned by the author (pp 110 & 132). One of these means, "Brahman is without the distinction of direction, space and time." The other is supposed to be from the ayurveda and does not directly concern the vedanta philosophy.

Group C: (1) Only 4 sutras from the *Yogasutra.*

(2) Fragments from Vyasa's commentary on only 7 sutras of the *Yogasutra.*

(3) Reference to 2 verses of the *Samkhyakarika.*

(4) Four sentences from the *Yogasarasamgraha.*

Let us first be clear about *group C* above. The yoga literature of Patanjali and others, as already noted, was based on the samkhya metaphysics (though, as is well-known, defying the original atheism of samkhya, Patanjali grafts the concept of god on it). The samkhya metaphysics, in so far as it is a view of the evolution of the world from primeval matter, may contain some form of rudimentary dialectics—a possibility which is already pointed to by serious scholars. But to call this dialectic much more advanced than Hegel and Marx is sheer nonsense. Also absurd is the claim that this dialectic is evidence of the dialectic of vedanta. In defence of vedanta, the view sought to be persistently refuted in the *Brahmasutra,* and Samkara's commentary on it, is nothing but the samkhya view. Samkara goes to the extent of characterising the samkhya as representing the main philosophical rival of vedanta. Thus by refuting samkhya he claims to have refuted all other rival philosophies "considering that by the conquest of the most dangerous adversary the conquest of the minor enemies is already virtually accomplished" (Samkara on Br. Su. ii.1.12). Thus the passages quoted in *group C* prove nothing about the dialectical view of vedanta.

Passages quoted in *group B* also have nothing to say about the vedanta dialectic. The *Gita* sometimes takes its stand on samkhya and sometimes on vedanta. Our author quoted a few scraps from the *Gita* where it takes stand on the samkhya. So these passages also are irrelevant for vedanta dialectic.

We are thus left only with passages quoted in *group A* as genuinely vedantic passages. Among these, most of the fragments quoted from the upanisads are not relevant for the dialectical outlook. As for the sutra quoted from the *Brahmasutra,* the author is unaware that it is mentioned in the text as representing the position of the buddhists. Badarayana mentions it only for the purpose of refuting it. It is not vedanta. In *group A,* we are ultimately left only with two fragments having anything to do with the dialectical outlook. One of these is from the *Chandogya Upanisad*: "How can being be born from nonbeing?" The other is from Samkara, saying "Thus, the nondifference of the effect from the cause." In Indian terminology the position referred to by these statements is known as *satkaryavada,* i.e. the doctrine of the preexistence of the effect in the cause. This was opposed to another view of causality—known as *asatkaryavada* or *arambhavada*— according to which the effect does not preexist in the cause; it is a new beginning altogether. The nyaya-vaisesikas held this view. As atomists, they felt the need of arguing that the "whole" thing produced out of the atoms had some new characteristics not already found in the atoms. In Indian philosophical literature there was a lot of controversy between these two views of the cause-effect relation. *Satkaryavada* was characteristically the doctrine of the samkhya philosophy; but the vedantists conditionally accepted it, i.e. in so far as it suited their position that the world—the effect of *Brahman*—was not at all different from *brahman.* We have seen how, in spite of the acceptance of the *satkaryavada,* the vedantists differed from the samkhyas. While the samkhyas claim that the world is a real transformation of primeval matter, the vedantists argue that it is some kind of illusory transformation (*vivarta*) of *brahman.* But our author does not note this. He thinks that *satkaryavada* as such is a momentous formulation of the dialectical outlook. He says, "Kapila's doctrine of dialectics, which is known *satkaryavada* in India from antiquity is in no way different from the

dialectical philosophy of Karl Marx of the nineteenth century" (p 65). But it seems that *satkaryavada* of the samkhyas was the real weakness of their dialectics. If it is admitted that there can be nothing new in the effect—if it is only a repetition of what is already contained in the cause—there can hardly be any explanation of quantitative change resulting in a qualitative change—of the emergence of new quality altogether—which is a fundamental law of dialectics as understood by Marx and Engels.

Complete Falsification of the Indian Philosophical Tradition

The philosophical materials actually used by our author to prove the superiority of vedanta dialectic over the dialectical outlook of Hegel and Marx are irrelevant and negligible. But the philosophical materials of India our author has to canceal for the purpose of boosting the vedanta philosophy are staggering. For example, the philosophical writings of Samkara, the most renowned representative of the vedanta philosophy, stand for: (a) total denial of the reality of matter, (b) total denial of the reality of change, i.e. the dialectical outlook, (c) total condemnation of the toiling millions of the country, whom Samkara knew as the sudras. To explain all these we need the scope of a separate book altogether.

However, there is one point without discussing which the present review would be incomplete. The author wants us to believe that materialism could not get real philosophical soil in India: "The Loukya Brihaspati school of materalism in Rigveda followed by the charvakas as also the buddhist school etc...could not catch roots in the vedic soil" (p 52). But not merely this. He is very anxious to emphasise that the very distinction between materialism and idealism is irrelevant in the vedic tradition and we must not pay any attention to it. Thus he says, "I feel it is incorrect and futile to try to understand

vedanta philosophy, materialist or idealist, by relating it mechanically to materialism and idealism of the western thinking as developed right from the antiquity of Greeks to Kant and Hegel" (p 19). He repeats, "Hence it would be clear that the distinction between idealist and materialist schools in vedanta is of no consequence until the basic authority of shruti and smruti texts is recognised" (p 21). He reasserts, "idealist and materialist peacefully coexisted in Indian history" (p 22). And so on. So, forget about idealism and materialism and have reverence only for sruti and smriti and for the incomparable wisdom of the vedanta.

Is this the way in which the Marxists want us to look at a philosophical situation? Surely not. We quote the remarks with which Lenin concludes his *Materialism and Empiriocriticism:* "Behind the epistemological scholasticism of empirio-criticism one must not fail to see the struggle of parties in philosophy, a struggle which in the last analysis reflects the tendencies and ideology of the antagonistic classes in modern society. Recent philosophy is as partisan as was philosophy two thousand years ago. The contending parties are essentially—although this is concealed by a pseudo-erudite quackery of new terms or by a weak-minded non-partisanship—materialism and idealism. The latter is merely a subtle, refined form of fideism, which stands fully armed, commands vast organisations and steadily continues to exercise influence on the masses, turning the slightest vacillation in philosophical thought to its own advantage. The objective class role of empiriocriticism consists entirely in rendering faithful service to the fideists in their struggle against materialism in general and historical materialism in particular".

Does not our author, with a Marxist mask on his face, serve the same objective class role when he asserts that without faith in the scriptures—sruti and smriti—no philosophy could get a soil in India?

A COMMENT ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

G. ADHIKARI

Creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the study of the problem of ancient Indian philosophy and ideology is absolutely essential, especially at present when reactionaries and chauvinists are misusing and misinterpreting this heritage to divert the attention of the younger generation from a scientific and materialist interpretation of the same. In Maharashtra, for instance, demagogues and pseudo-scientists like Datta Bal are utilising a wrong and perverted glorification of vedanta to attack the ideology of scientific socialism of Marx and Engels. Counteracting this and making a positive contribution to the problem is a difficult task. Dange's work *India—From Primitive Communism to Slavery* (1949), though controversial in parts, was a pioneer work in this direction. Works of Rahul Sankrityayana and Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya have also made useful contribution and all these are pioneer efforts in this direction.

Bani Deshpande's essays on "Yogashastra" which appeared in *Yugantar*, the organ of the Maharashtra state council of our party, from July to September 1973, his recent work *The Universe of Vedanta* (November 1974) published by the Indian Institute of Social Studies, Bombay, as well as his latest essay on "Philosophy of Marxism and Vedanta" published in the first issue of *Lok-Vangmaya*, the newly-started theoretical-cultural magazine from Bombay, are meant to be contributions in the same direction. But it is difficult to place these contributions on the same footing as those mentioned in the previous para. On the other hand, one is constrained to say that these are examples of a wrong and distorted application of Marxism-Leninism to our country's past ideological and philo-

sophical heritage, which confuses more than clarifies and will do more harm than good to the party.

Every new and pioneering effort will not always be free from mistakes and such inadequacies should not be an excuse to discourage or ban such efforts. But where such efforts are marred by gross distortion of Marxism-Leninism itself, it is necessary to subject them to sharp criticism and collective discussion in order to correct the mistakes and to improve the style of work.

Bani Deshpande's *The Universe of Vedanta* was no doubt written with the object of countering Datta Bal's distorted glorification of vedanta philosophy and his vilification of Marxism-Leninism. But when the author attempts discover the latest ideas of modern science in vedanta philosophy by a wrong understanding of Marxian dialectics. he is not fighting the reactionary ideas of men like Datta Bal but only bringing grist to their mill. In the publisher's note signed by the president of the Indian Institute of Social Studies, it is stated:

"Basing his thesis on the *Yogasutra* of Maharshi Patanjali, commentary of Maharshi Vyasa and the upanishads, Deshpande has conclusively established that the theory of relativity of space and time and materiality of time was not only known to the ancient philosophers but they proved it as scientifically as Einstein proved in modern physics" (p xi).

The publisher says further: "the vedic outlook was not only scientific...but it was based on a highly perfected and scientific theory of dialectical materialism now known by the name of Karl Marx, since the last century".

The publisher further claims that "the higher development" of Marxian dialectics is to be found "in the science of yoga, which according to him (author) is 'the highest culmination of the dialectical philosophy' of vedanta".

So the claims the book makes are three: (1) the scientific ideas of matter, space and time as developed in post-Einstein modern physics are already clearly formulated in

the vedanta philosophical works; (2) materialistic dialectics as developed by Marx and Engels is already present in the vedanta philosophy "in a more developed form"; (3) the vedantavadins of ancient India were able to achieve this giant ideological stride because of *yoga,* the "highest culmination of dialectical philosophy".

Dange in his evaluation of this work is more cautious. But he also thinks: "The study is guided by the laws of dialetical materalism as given to us by Marx" and adds: "The book is bound to be controversial...not only from the point of view of Indian philosophy, but also the sum up of the whole development of the Indian people, their history and life".

Dange thinks that *brahma* is "a cognisable material reality" and the task of analysing it "was undertaken by philosophers with such facts of natural sciences as they could gather at the level of their civilisation. How far they reached in this and what astounding analysis and synthesis they did, which are more or less equal to the conceptions of modern sciences regarding space and time and the cognition, is best left to the learned discussion made by Bani Deshpande in his work" (p 10).

Thus Dange confrms Bani Deshpande's claim that the conception of matter, space and time as they occur in vedanta philosophy are *more* or *less equal* to those of modern science. But then he raises the question as to how the ancient vedantavadins, in the absence of the modern technological advance, could arrive at these ideas. The answer he gives is "the science of yoga". In his foreword he says:

"Did the social and natural surroundings, or any special discipline of the body and mind which also as biological instruments, have to be refashioned for scientific inquiry, play any special role helping the vedavadins to arrive at this astounding cognition of the world process, its laws and philosophy, despite the fact that the technological advance that helps the modern philosophers did not exist then. Yes.

"This is the science of yoga as Bani Deshpande has shown in many of his articles published so far and one of whose best exponents was Patanjali" (p 14).

What is the 'science of yoga'? This is not made clear. But it is stated: "It is now receiving attention from modern scientists and philosophers."

Bani Deshpande, in his earlier articles in *Yugantar* had made the claim that Soviet scientists were now investigating the "science of yoga"—a claim which further inquiry did not confirm. "Science of yoga" is perhaps such a specialised system of physiological discipline which gives man an extrasensory insight—an *intuition* which enabled a yogi to see and know what an ordinary man cannot. In the context of explaining the science of yoga, Dange defines this intuition thus:

"Intuition as an instrument of superior knowledge, is a condition of matter in its process of thinking, to which human body can be conditioned."

Dange tells that Bani Deshpande's book "is the first attempt to explain scientific basis of yoga and the philosophy on which it was based" (p 15).

Dange then proceeds to quote the eighth thesis on Feuerbach by Karl Marx: "Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries, which mislead theory to mysticism, find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice."

The mysteries of the science of yoga which mislead theory to mysticism have actually found the rational solution in modern human practice and that solution is that the socalled "science of yoga" is *not* an instrument of superior knowledge and there is no *yoga* shortcut to superior knowledge.

Coming to Bani Deshpande's preface and the main book itself, let us see how far he has been able to substantiate the three claims which we mentioned earlier. His claim that the scientific conception of matter, space and time as defined the post-Einsteinian physics are already present

in the texts of vedanta philosophy seems to be based on arbitrary reading of his own meaning in these selected texts. It is not possible to go into an examination in depth of these Sanskrit quotations and texts. But this will have to be done by competent persons and the matter thoroughly checked up.

Bani Deshpande cannot claim that he is the first Marxist scholar to delve into vedantic texts. Others before him have done considerable work on the subject but none, as far as I know, has made such a novel claim on behalf of vedanta philosophy. Walter Ruben (GDR) has, for instance, published a three-volume work: *Development of Productive Relations in Ancient India.* In his first volume he deals with Rigvedic society but has nowhere made such a claim. But that is no argument against the original contribution of our author. But that original contribution must be proved by something more than arbitrary selection of quotations and texts and their questionable translation.

For instance, the author states:

"And it is no exaggeration to say that the dimensions of scientific thinking of ancient Indian thinkers, in the field of philosophy, had crossed and left behind in some respects even the twentieth century in which knowledge is standing firmly rooted in the high development of natural sciences" (p 18).

The matter is more concretely put later on where the claim is made that "the concept of matter in vedanta, in so far as the qualitative diversity and the inexhaustible forms of manifestations of its structure and property are concerned have not only been corroborated by Marxist philophy but they have also been confirmed by the findings of modern science" (p 73).

Again, in another place we find stated that "the vedic concept of matter, expressing the general property of objects and phenomena existing independently, outside man's consciousness, as objective reality and reflecting its existence in man's consciousness, was a fully developed scienti-

fic concept even though it may have been arrived at with the aid or help of another instrument, which they named *purusha* in place of the knowledge of natural sciences" (p 75).

How did vedantavadins arrive at a scientific conception of matter, which is as developed as the one put forward by the founders of scientific socialism, and at a time when modern natural sciences were not available to them? The author's answer is:

"Without the inevitable establishment of the unity of *prakriti* and *purusha* by the sankhyas and raising it into the concept of brahma by the advaitis in the thinking process, any progress in thinking and developing such a highly scientific and philosophical outlook would have been impossible" (pp 75-76).

Thus the author says it was the *nirguna* concept of *purusha* of the sankhya philosophy and of *brahma* of the advaita philosophers "which is of utmost significance in correctly understanding the vedanta philosophy, but for which they too would have been left groping for thousands of years like any other philosophical schools in the world" (p 76).

This means that the vedantavadins arrived at a scientific and dialectical conception of matter through the medium of the idealist conception of *purusha* and *brahma* of the sankhya and advaita philosophers. But this is not how modern Marxists analyse the conception of matter by ancient philosophers. For instance, in a Marxist scientific textbook *Atom,* published in the GDR, one finds the following in its introductory chapter on the "philosophical conception of matter":

"In general the conception of matter by the ancient philosophers is of a naively primitive and of a speculative character—this is due to the low level of the development of the productive forces—and because the research of the various forms of matter was as yet in its initial stages. A new and a greater upsurge of materialist thought begins

only towards the end of the middle ages, when the modern sciences begin to develop" (*Atom—Structure of Matter,* 1970, p xiv).

It is true that in this book the authors are dealing with ancient Greek philosophy only and do not make any mention of Indian philosophy. The point we want to make is that it is incorrect and unMarxist to attribute modern scientific conception of matter to ancient Indian philosophers of an age when productive forces could not have been very much developed (stage of cattle-breeding and primitive agriculture).

Our author is not disturbed by these considerations. He goes on further to attribute modern scientific conception of time and space to vedanta thinkers. Thus, for instance, says:

"...a scientific concept of space and time had not developed and could not be understood by anyone in the world for thousands of years except the vedanta philosophers until Einstein, at the dawn of the twentieth century, explained it in modern science...

"Idealist schools in the west denied all through the objectivity of space and time and considered them the product or creation of man's consciousness. It was only the vedanta philosophy which held the most scientific view of these concepts until understood by modern science" (p 95).

The author knows and says they could arrive at "this revolutionary conclusion" only as a result of developments in the field of modern physics in the first decade of this century. But, says the author, "what must have prompted Patanjali, Vyasa and other vedanta philosophers to arrive at such conclusions is anybody's guess and only emphasises the need for more study of the scientific dialectical outlook of the Indian scriptures by better equipped and more able scholars than a student like me" (pp 102-3).

Though the author takes here the pose of a modest student, he goes forward to propound that the vedic philo-

sophers not only had a scientific Einsteinian conception of space and time, but also described "the universe as science does today or express it in terms of the concept of space-time-continuum as Einstein could do" (p 110).

Our author tells us that the *dig-desha-kala-bheda-shunyam brahma*, i.e. brahma which is devoid of the destruction of time, space and direction is the space-time-continuum of Einstein. This is not all. He goes further to state that this conception of brahma of the vedic philosophers is "more correct, appropriate and meaningful than even the definition of space-time-continuum as given by Einstein because the vedic definition carries more clearer the scientific concept of physical reality, as continuity of matter in perpetual motion and development than Einstein's concept of continuum" (p 111). So the author concludes that the vedic philosophers established "in the realms of philosophy and science ... the inseparable interconnection of space and time, long before the only definition of a 'space-time-continuum' given after them by Einstein in the field of natural science came on the scene particularly in modern physics" (p 111).

What is the proof? A questionable translation of the abovementioned sutra?

We now come to the second part, namely that materialistic dialectics as postulated by Marx is already present in vedanta philosophy and in a more developed form. Our author postulates that the philosophy of Kapila Muni "established and developed the theory of dialectics to such a remarkable perfection that it baffles our imagination even today and simply leaves us stunned in awe and admiration of his genius. He not only declared like others that matter or universe is eternal, but it may be said now that he was the first man in the world to *prove* it scientifically". Kapila's doctrine, he says, "is in no way different from the dialectical philosophy of Karl Marx of the nineteenth century" (p 65).

Now it is well-known that the ancient Greeks and ancient

Indians had developed their own dialectical thought. The dialectics of Heraclitus and that of vedic and buddhist philosophers was of primitive elementary character and has to be distinguished from the dialectics of Hegel and Marx and Engels which arose after the industrial revolution and the rise of modern science and technology. But for our author the scientific and vital distinction between the dialectics of the ancient Greek and Indian philosophy and that Hegel and Marx and Engels does not exist. He lumps the two together. Thus he states:

"The ancient vedanta philosophers like Kapil, Badarayan, Patanjali, Vyasa, Shri Krishna, Panini and Marx and Engels of our time were the most brilliant dialecticians world history can record. Their approach, their methodology, their outlook and the whole system of thinking, being based on dialectical philosophy, was apparently more scientific than the outlook of many luminaries of modern science" (p 153).

He expresses the same idea a few paras earlier: "Thus, while the vedanta philosophy lay deeply submerged in the ignorance of the Indians, Karl Marx with his own great genius and brilliant originality, once again unfurled the flag of vedanta over the world, establishing its philosophy and theories, its dialectical laws and scientific outlook which engulfed the whole of the oppressed mankind groping its way for emancipation and ultimate happiness" (p 152).

Thus, according to the author, the dialectics of Panini and Patanjali, of Badarayan and Kapila Muni is indentical with that of Marx and Engels; when vedanta philosophy fell into oblivion in India itself, 'Karl Marx unfurled the flag of vedanta over the world"! In the present book itself there is no separate chapter on the "Dialectics of Vedanta" as he is soon bringing out another book of that name, which is already advertised on the back-page of the jacket. But in the present book itself, he has again and again emphasised the assertion. Thus he says "It was only the high

scientific dialectical outlook which enabled the vedanta philosophers and Marx and Engels to probe the mysteries of this universe" (p 154). In this para the author goes on to say that the vedanta philosophers in their pursuit of the "underlying truth of physical reality" were able to see "the supreme spirit in the image of man" and concludes with the following wonderful formulation: "...when god was confronted with the great dialecticians of India, he smilingly descended in the image of man. Hence Vyasa and Marx could say that 'etadvastu jnyanasya jneyam'!" (which the author translates freely on p 121 as "everything in this universe is knowable to man's intelligence").

The author is not giving a scientific exposition of the dialectical outlook of vedanta philosophy but a mystic one, which enables him to see the supreme spirit in the image of man and equate Vyasa and Marx. He further states: "It was in proving the eternity and the indestructibility or the *amritatvam* of the brahma according to the laws of dialectics that the vedanta philosophers established their supremacy over every school of philosophy virtually wiping them out of existence from the soil of India and which has to be admitted today as the supreme feat of their intellectual brilliance" (p 155).

That vedanta philosophy established its supremacy and wiped out other, among them materialist, schools of philosophy through intellectual brilliance, is a statement of doubtful value. Buddhist and other materialist schools of philosophy were not less brilliant in their own way and their disappearance without a trace in India is a complex problem. It has been posed and is being studied by scholars. The aspect of class-domination and class-struggle in the field of the history of ideology needs also to be taken into consideration in this regard. Our author nowhere takes this aspect into consideration. The superiority of vedanta philosophy he seems to attribute to its being armed with the laws of dialectics which he considers superior to those of Marx and Engels, but which he understands in an idealistic and mystic way. And he comes to the fantastic conclusion

that had the vedanta philosophy thus not proved its superiority and survived, "Kapila's discovery of the greatest of all the sciences of the world, viz his discovery of the dialectical philosophy and its scientific world outlook, *perhaps* may never have been known to Marx and the world could have been without it" (p 155).

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya in his exhaustive review of the book has thoroughly examined all the Sanskrit texts on which the author claims to base his novel discovery and has come to the conclusion that they "are irrelevant and negligible" "to prove the superiorty of vedanta over the dialectical outlook of Hegel and Marx". However, one more quotation from the author would not be out of place, if only to show to what absurd length of exaggeration he goes: "The ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish, but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached" (p 30).

The author has systematically avoided to answer the question whether vedanta philosophy was idealist or materialist. He seems to suggest that the question can only be taken up after 'the dialectical basis' of the vedanta is established, which he proposes to do in his forthcoming book. But the exposition of that he has given in the present volume, and the claim he makes about vedanta dialectics being superior to that of Marx and Engels arises, as we have seen, from his idealist and mystic understanding of the latter dialectics itself.

Thus he says: "...I feel it is incorrect and futile to try to understand vedanta philosophy, materialist or idealist, by relating it mechanically to materialism or the idealism of the wesetrn thinking as developed right from the antiquity of Greeks to Kant and Hegel" (p 19). He thinks that idealism and materialism, as developed in the west, do not mean anything according to vedanta philosophy unless it is proved in its "dialectical synthesis".

Further he again says: "Thus we see the fundamental and

qualitative difference between all the schools of western thinking and the vedanta philosophy. In the western thinking there have been idealist and materialist thinkers alike from the ancient to the modern times. But they had no obligation of a common law of dialectics like a touchstone to prove their contentions... It was characteristic of the vedanta philosophy only wherein even an idealist could not just adhere to his philosophy unless he could prove it on the basis of the laws of dialectics" (p 20).

Again, towards the end of the book, summing up the fundamentals of vedanta philosophy, its dialectical basis and scientific outlook, he repeats the same idea: "As for whether it (vedanta philosophy) is idealist or materialist thinking, I feel it would be premature to discuss it here unless it is understood in the light of the dialectical basis which, unfortunately is not yet realised by our philosophers, is the fundamental basis of the vedanta philosophy. Hence I would prefer to discuss it only after its dialectical basis is explained. Until this is done we may at the most classify it as one of the most scientific pre-Marxist philosophy and outlook in the world" (p 156).

The contention of the author, summed up in the above quotations, lands him in a contradiction. He is unwilling to characterise vedanta philosophy as either idealist or materialist but claims for it a dialectical basis which he equates with the dialectics of Marx. Questions about the concept of matter, space and time, about the cognition and the unity of the world—to all such questions of philosophy, vedanta, according to the author, has "boldly provided an answer in its unswerving loyalty and unshakable faith in the dialectical philosophy and its highly scientific world outlook" (p 120). This theme runs like a red thread throughout the book. The whole fallacy and confusion arises because the author is operating with a conception of dialectics which is idealist and mystic and not Marxist at all.

It is not necessary to take up the Sanskrit texts quoted by the author because we concede the point that

a certain measure of dialectics was present in the ideas of matter, space, time, of unity and cognition of the world, in ancient Indian philosophy, in the vedanta and particularly in the prebuddhist materialist and buddhist literature. Ancient Greek philosophy had also its dialectics—that of Aristotle and Heraclitus. Marx and Engels paid great attention to the philosophy of the Greeks and appraised it highly. But they sharply distinguished it from that of Hegel's and their own which they point out could only arise at a still higher stage of social development. They were acquainted with buddhist philosophy but the claim that Marx and Engels and Lenin "were enamoured of vedanta philosophy" is a figment of the author's imagination. But the point here is that the dialectics of Marx and Engels and even that of Hegel could only arise after a certain stage of social development, or more precisely after the upsurge of the natural sciences at the time of the industrial revolution. In the preface to Engels's unfinished work *Dialectics of Nature,* the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CC CPSU writes that Engels, "using ample evidence from the history of natural science, particularly from the renaissance to the middle of the nineteenth century, dealt thoroughly with the problem of the relationship between philosophy and natural science" and proved "that 'the return to dialectics takes place unconsciously, hence contradictorily and slowly' and that divested of Hegelian mysticism, dialectics 'becomes an absolute necessity for natural science' " (p 8).

In their works, Marx and Engels stress again and again that their dialectics could only arise and be developed on the basis of contemporary natural science and of their study. In his preface to the second edition of *Anti-Duhring* Engels wrote: "Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics from German idealist philosophy and apply it in the materialist conception of nature and history. But a knowledge of mathematics and natural science is essential to the conception of nature which is dialectical and at the same time material" (p 16).

It is well known that Marx and particularly Engels devoted a great deal of their time and labour to the study of contemporary developments in natural science because they understood their crucial significance for the materialist dialectics which they were elaborating. Engels's unfinished work *Dialectics of Nature* is a brilliant proof of this. In the preface of that book, the editors say:

"During the same period (1858-59) Engels began to study physics and physiology...especially the cell theory and the theory of transformation of energy, in elaborating dialectics. Darwin's *Origin of Species,* which appeared at the end of 1859, gave further impetus to scientific studies of Marx and Engels. Engels read Darwin's book as soon as it was published. Marx, who read it late in 1860, gave a classical definition of the significance which Darwin's great discovery would have for Marxism. 'This is the book which provides the natural historic basis for our concept', he wrote to Engels on 19 December 1860. In later years Marx and Engels considerably extended the range of their scientific studies. They studied biology, anatomy, physiology, astronomy, physics, chemistry and other sciences" (p 7).

The foregoing digression was perhaps necessary to bring out sharply the difference between the dialectics of the ancient Greeks and that of Hegel, emerging more than a millennium later, after an upsurge in the development of natural science began in the 18th and the 19th centuries. It was this latter which Marx and Engels put the right side up, divesting it of its idealist and mystic basis and by uncovering its materialist base, and elaborated it still further in the light of still newer discoveries of natural science as a general law of motion of nature, life and society. *Dialectics of Nature* of Engels is in a way devoted to the working out of this basis in great detail. Advising the "theoreticians in the field of natural science...to acquaint themselves more closely with dialectical philosophy in its historically existing forms", Engels identifies "two which

may prove especially fruitful for modern natural science", viz the Greek and that of Hegel (p 45).

About Greek philosophy, he says: "Here dialectical thought appears in its pristine simplicity... Among the Greeks—just because they were not yet advanced enough to dissect, analyse nature—nature is still viewed as a whole, in general. The universal connection of natural phenomena is not proved in regard to particulars; to the Greeks it is the result of direct contemplation. Herein lies the inadequacy of Greek philosophy..." (pp 45-46). Engels points out that the "Greeks had no empirical natural science", but their "atomistics", their general dialectical conception of nature gave them a superiority so that "Theoretical natural science is...forced to go back to the Greeks if it desires to trace the history of the origin and development of the general principles it holds today" (p 46).

In the same book in the chapter on dialectics in which its various laws are expounded, Engels again emphasises the distinction between the dialectics of the Greeks and the buddhists on the one hand and that of modern dialectics on the other:

"On the other hand, dialectical thought—precisely because it presupposes investigation of the nature of concepts themselves—is only possible for man, and for him only at a comparatively high stage of development (buddhists and Greeks), and it attains its full development much later still through modern philosophy—and yet we have the colossal results already among the Greeks which by far anticipate investigation!" (p 223).

There is no reason to believe that the knowledge of empirical science which ancient Indians had in the days when vedantic philosophy emerged was any higher than that possessed by the Greeks in the same period. Alberuni in his travelogue says: "In former times, the Hindus used to acknowledge that the progress of science due to the Greeks is much more important than that which is due to themselves" (Alberuni's *India*, Sechau edition, 1-22-23). There-

fore without going into any of the Sanskrit texts quoted by the author and their doubtful interpretations by him we reject the fantastic claim of the author that vedanta philosophy contains ideas of space, time and matter which anticipate those of modern physics and contains dialectics which is equal to that of Marx and Engels. This, as well as his refusal to characterise vedanta philosophy as idealist, a fact recognised by all, arises because his understanding of dialectics is not Marxist, but idealist and mystic. This lands him into absurd and unscientific exaggerations which smack of national chauvinism. Thus he says:

"In the pursuit of knowledge the Indian philosophers ...had left nothing unsaid as far as possible for the human intelligence without the aid of modern science. They had perfected the science of dialectics and had developed it to a higher stage in their science of yoga which many modern thinkers do not know. It is a great irony of fate that based on the philosophy of dialectics and mainly by intuition, what the Indian thinkers could accomplish in the ancient days, has been accomplished by the modern thinkers with the aid of science but yet without a dialectical philosophy and its scientific outlook" (pp 119-20).

Thus the vedantavadins were able to perform their intellectual feat because they had succeeded in perfecting "the science of dialectics" "to a higher stage in their science of yoga". This once again proves that the author's understanding of dialectics is idealistic and mystic. We also see here how one absurdity leads to another. The author seems to suggest that the vedantavadins arrived at perfected modern dialectics and at ideas of matter, space, time and universe which correspond to those of modern physics, including Einstein, because they developed the "science of yoga". Dange, who as we have seen raised the quesiton in his preface, has given the same answer. But it is claimed that 'the science of yoga' is not to be understood in an idealist or mystic way, but scientifically. "Science of yoga", it is claimed, is based on "intuition" which it is said is being studied by Soviet scientists. He says: "The

Russian scientists have also accepted the existence of the phenomena of intuition (antahspurti) which has been wrongly understood by all the idealists of the world as a phenomenon of extrasensory perception" (p 44).

Intuition has been studied by progressive modern scientists, including Marxists. None of them has claimed that intuition leads to extrasensory knowledge. Discoveries said to be made by great scientists through intuition, arise out of their deep and wide knowledge of their respective science and its constant study. They are always a sally, a step ahead, of the existing level of knowledge but never a leap of extrasensory perception. The author himself has explained the point in this sense, citing examples of great scientific discoveries (p 47). But the author does not stop there. He claims that there are higher stages of intuition, in which "many faculties develop in the sensory organs and our body which are lying dormant and normally unknown to human experience which Patanjali has explained and science alone will have to investigate". "It cannot be denied", he continues, "that intuition is also a phenomenon which enables many people to exactly foretell and foresee things which are beyond normal sensory capacities of human organism or beyond even the most sophisticated instruments" (p 48).

The author congratulates Soviet scientists for having established "a new branch of science known as psychotronics, meaning the science of investigating the mystic powers of mind and body, which as Soviet scientists say, 'will change our lives' " (p 48). He also quotes a book by G. Volkov, *Man and the Challenge of Technology*, in support of this view. We have seen an English edition of the booklet by G. Volkov (published by Progress Publishers, Moscow, and available here). It certainly discusses the question of intuition but has nowhere made the claim that Soviet scientists see intuition as an instrument of extrasensory perception or as being capable of such a development. Similarly we have no evidence of "psychotronics" being developed as a "science" in the Soviet Union. On the other

hand, we have seen in the March 1975 issue of *Sputnik* from Moscow an article by a Soviet scientist exposing by practical experiments the fraud of psychotronics.

But our author claims that a scientific explanation of the 'science of yoga' and this sort of intuition is possible. He confidently foretells that "science alone will answer whether matter has an inherent property of reacting precisely to the future course of events and phenomena, whether super-light-velocity phenomenon exists in nature or whether matter can exist out of time!" (p 48).

This question is already answered: "To assume that technological development will enable us to attain velocities greater than the velocity of light is just as ridiculous as to suggest that the absence of points on the earth's surface more than 20,000 kilometres is not a geographical law, but the upshot of our limited knowledge, and to hope that some day, when geography makes further advances, we shall be able to find points on the earth that are still farther apart" (*What is Relativity*? by L. Landau & Y. Rumer, Mir Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p 39).

Having forecast such items of science-fiction, he has no hesitation in saying the following: "All I can say today is that what the idealists call the extrasensory perception is nothing but the inherent property of matter to react to future course" (p 48).

It is difficult to understand what this means. Perhaps this is the author's "materialist" explanation of yoga, which according to him "is the science of the powers of mind and body which the ancient Indians having acquired and explained it never called it mystic" (p 49).

If *yogashastra* is the key to the understanding of the intellectual feats achieved by vedanta philosophers, we must know more about our auhor's ideas about this wonderful "science" than what he has given us in this book. We get some idea of this from his articles in *Yugantar*, our Maharashtra party council's weekly, on yogashastra and intuition. Summing up his article on the "Basic Principle of Yogashastra" he says:

"Yoga is a profound scientific knowledge. There is no place in it for idealism or obscurantism. We must grasp this.

"*A Step Ahead of Marx*

"If breath is negated, a qualitative change takes place in the body in accordance to the scientific principle of negation of negation. Such I say is the scientific definition of yoga.

"The word *yam* (in Prana-yam) means *nirodh* or negation. Hence, according to the above definition, the technique of man reaching a new and a higher stage (or condition) means pranayam; such is its scientific definition.

"This is not all. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the highest development of the principle of the dialectical evolution in nature, and the golden pinnacle of man's knowledge, is yogashastra. This is why in ancient times this science was called brahmavidya. I have not the slightest hesitation to assert, as a communist, that the researches of yogashastra had advanced a step ahead even of Marx" (*Yugantar*, 8 July 1973, p 6).

In another article by the author on "Intuition" he explains the same point further:

"Though modern science has not accepted yogashastra, it has accepted a very important principle of ancient yogashastra and that is that in the condition of (mental) concentration, a biological process takes place in the human body enabling it to attain knowledge. This (recognition) is a matter of pride for us from the point of view of vedanta philosophy and yogashastra.

"In the condition of concentration other important processes sometimes occur. Some individuals of talented genius, in a certain condition of concentration of mind and thought, are able to attain sometimes and accidentally, unprecedented and astounding knowledge. We call knowledge thus attained, knowledge through intuition or antarjnyan" (*Yugantar*, 16 September 1973, p 4).

In the present book he claims that in these "articles on yoga I have proved it as the highest perfection of vedic dialectics known as brahmavidya or the science of the 'greatest and highest knowledge'... Indians should not be surprised if the science of yoga is explained in terms of modern science and again taught to Indians in the western countries in the next few years, which, of course, many will gladly accept! Vedanta has explained the scientific basis of yoga and it cannot be understood without the knowledge of dalectics whether Marxist or vedic" (pp 44-45).

These quotations speak for themselves. No comment is necessary. The author's claim about yogashastra, as a higher dialectics, opening the doors to superior knowledge, and which as he says the ancients taught only to selected students etc. (pp 46-47) is untenable. It conflicts with Marxist epistemology. It is obscurantist and mystic. One may mention here that our late comrade V. D. Chitale, who had made a deep study of this subject, used to tell us that he would never bring this inside the party because he knew that it is contradictory to Marxism-Leninism.

In conclusion, we find that the three claims which the book makes, and which we set out at the beginning of this comment, have been found to be untenable and we may sum up our findings thus:

(1) Ideas of matter, space and time, which we find in vedanta philosophy are better expressed in Indian materialist philosophy, and those of vedanta philosophy can by no strentch of imagination be equated to those of modern physics or to those of Marxism.

(2) The dialectics we find in vedanta philosophy, and in a better form in the Indian materialist philosophy, cannot be equated with that developed by Marx and Engels. Such a claim is unMarxist. It can at best be compared to that developed by Greek philosophers, which as Engels proves in *Dialectics of Nature* is of primitive type, and the dialectics of Hegel and its further development by Marx

could only arise after the development of natural science in the 19th century. The author operates with a 'dialectics' which is idealist and mystic, not with that of Marx and Engels which is *materialist.*

(3) The author's refusal to characterise vedanta philosophy either as idealist or materialist, and his attempt to present it as a 'scientific', even materialist, philosophy is not only wrong and arbitrary but positively harmful. By doing so he deviates from the Marxist principle of philosophy being divided into two camps—that of idealism and materialism. He ignores the historic fact that in India too the battle between idealism and materialism was bitterly fought, that there arose materialist schools which denied vedapramanya and brahma. His gibe at Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana and Dr Kosambi, who did scholarly work in expounding Indian materialism, is in bad taste. His attempt to present *brahma,* the basic concept of god-making idealism, as "the physical reality, the universe" and which he says "can be literally expressed as the existence in 'space-time-continuum' ", is based on gross mis-translation of the sutra "Digdesha-kala-bheda-shunyam brahma" which really means "*brahma* is beyond the destruction of time and space"—a purely idealist conception.

(4) His explanation that vedantavadins were able to achieve the intellectual feat which he describes in his book, because of the intuition or antarjnyan which they developed through the practice of yoga, to say the least, is a resort to obscurantism and mysticism.

ERUDITE QUACKERY ON VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Bani Deshpande

Introduction

It is true that according to the brahmanical orthodoxy and traditions in India, vedanta represents the highest philosophical wisdom not only in our time but since thousands of years. At the same time because of its deep antiquity, the ancient Indians also considered it of the nature of direct revelation. They thought so because they had inherited it from their ancient forefathers whom they called *devas* and which is translated as *gods*. It is for this reason that it is mentioned everywhere that prajapati gave them the yajna in the hoary *Treta Yug* or epoch and which the gods did not possess in the *Krita Yug*. It is irrelevant here to go into the details of the *yajna* and *yugas* with which you may be familiar.

It is also true that *shruti*, *smriti* and the *puranas* are the most important part of the vast literature through which India and its people have inherited their knowledge about their ancient history, culture, civilisation, etc. lasting over thousands of years.

It is also true that *vedanta* is considered by all Indians in general and by all its ancient and modern accredited spokesmen in particular as being based on the authority of *shruti* and *smriti*.

It is also true that a class of people in India known as *brahmins* held the monopoly of knowledge since times immemorial because of a peculiar social-economic organisation which the ancient Indians had evolved for themselves,

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Text of speech at the conference, 6-7 May 1975.

whose original structure was based on the principle of the division of labour in society.

Lastly it is also true that Indian people have been under the influence of this philosophy for thousands of years and its influence cannot be denied even in our times too.

What is the significance of these facts? The significance lies in that the social historians and we Marxists in particular must recognise these facts *as facts* existing as part of the historical reality irrespective of the subjective consciousness of *those* who may not like it.

It is also important to bear in mind that these facts exist in our society whether communists Like Chattopadhyaya like them or not. There is no need, therefore, for me to add anything more to this awe about the vedanta philosophy as Chattopadhyaya says, as far abler authorities than me have done enough justice to it in the past. I am only a student and I do not claim to deserve that status of an authority.

Why Take Note of Chattopadhyaya's Criticism

The main and the first critic of my book, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, having got the first honoured place in the Communist Party's theoretical journal *Party Life* (Vol XI, No 6, hereafter *PL* 6), has successfullly built a reputation of a Marxist writer on Indian philosophy. But seeing the content of his review and the criticism of my book, the petty jibes he has hurled at me and the total absence of any proper discussion of the main subject of the book, shows that he is not serious about Marxism, philosophy or criticism. It looks like a command performance of hilarious shrieks of a professor whose vanity is somewhere hurt and hence lost his balance.

But a serious note has to be taken of his criticism for the simple reason that it has found a place in the theoretical organ of our party, and an impression is sought to be created that his review represents the views of the party secretariat.

Normally speaking I would not object if the CPI were to criticise vedanta philosophy, its idealistic or mystic character, as it has been preserved and explained by the ignorant brahmanical orthodoxy and modern studies. We shall see later that what is claimed as "accredited version" of the vedanta philosophy by the party is a total distortion and what my critic is writing is based on its wrong interpretation as understood by the western philosophers and the western-oriented Indians under their influence and has nothing to do even with its accredited representatives. It is, therefore, necessary to expose such pretensions about so serious a subject as Indian philosophy.

What is the character of the socalled 'critique' of *The Universe of Vedanta?* It is written in the style of cheap street-corner demagogy. It is full of deliberate distortions, giving quotations without reference to context, imputing false motives of his own imagination and slanders which, I feel, no honest communist should ever do.

Not satisfied with such tricks, he has also drawn a few conclusions of his own. We shall deal in short with some of them here and later with the rest.

These conclusions appear on page 18 of *PL* 6 which I need not rewrite for they are as much vulgarisation of Marxist analytical outlook as of vedanta philosophy and its thinkers. The most important of them characterises my book as "glorificaton of brahminical orthodoxy and Hindu chauvinism to such an extent as to arouse envy even of Golwalkar and RSS ideologists". This is followed by his usual trick of brandishing the shield of Marxism-Leninism and shouting hoarse about its repudiation and vilification of Soviet scientists and their activities etc.

He has, therefore donned the mantle of unmasking the book and exposing the falsification of Marxism, Soviet science and Indian philosophical tradition because as he says, "no less a person than the chairman of the CPI has authenticated it", meaning in simple words that the party chairman is also guilty of all the charges levelled by him.

Thus our author establishes a clear political motivation of his holy task of defending Marxism and Leninism by maligning the chairman of brahminical orthodoxy and Hindu chauvinism of Golwalkar and RSS type. But I will leave this part to be dealt with by the chairman himself who is fortunately present here, and who never had this charge thrown at him.

This, therefore, is one more reason why a serious note has to be taken of the article in the theoretical organ of the party, sowing seeds of disruption, at a time when the party has successfully emerged united after its 10th congress at Vijayawada, and attacking the party chairman in order to misguide our working class about its history and tradition. Greater men than Chattopadhyaya have repeatedly tried it before, but many of them are now themselves hand-in-glove with the RSS and the "total revolution" on the rampage !

An Example of Subjective Criticism

S. A. Dange in his preface to my book writes, "Not being a student of physics, philosophy and natural sciences, all of which form the core of these papers, I would not be able to say much beyond stating that *The Universe of Vedanta* has been presented here in a completely new light. The study is guided by the laws of dialectical materialism as given to us by Marx and utilises the material left over by the ancient vedic records and the modern understanding of the universe as given by Einstein and developed further by Soviet philosophers and scientists. The book is bound to be controversial, if people care to study, not only from the point of view of Indian philosophy but also the sum up of the whole development of the Indian people, their history and life" (p 1). Our critic has deliberately quoted the *middle* sentence of Dange without reference to its context.

Chattopadhyaya quotes me, "Hence I must mention that I was very happy when Comrade Dange read my thesis

and gladly agreed to write an introduction" (p 57). After this I continue, which our critic has suppressed, that "Being a deep student of Marxism and history and known for his versatility and erudition, I could not have felt more honoured than to have a few words by way of an introduction, *although he may or may not agree with all that I have written*" (emphasis added).

Does this mean that Dange has authenticated all that I have written? Does this mean that the chairman agrees with all that I have written? But our critic did not deliberately quote these sentences in his game of maligning the chairman by charging him of Hindu chauvinism, glorification of brahminical orthodoxy and vilification of Soviet scientists.

Not only this. Not satisfied with maligning the chairman, he has also managed to drag in my wife's name Roza Deshpande, MP, which in fact has no relation either to the theories I have expounded or to the preface of the chairman. This reference does not appear or is omitted in *PL6* but occurs in the *Mainstream* dated 12 April 1975. It is below my dignity and culture to reply to such a critic, had it not been that the party secretariat agreed to make this trash of a review the basis of serious discussion.

Before dealing with the criticism, one more important objection raised by him in his review has to be answered. He has taken pains to count the number of pages of the main thesis, of the chairman's preface, calculated the ratio of the preface to my thesis, counted the number of books used as source material, calculated the number of quotations from each of them and pronounced the verdict that "And these are about all. That one can be brave enough to write a serious book on vedanta philosophy depending on such insignificant data is incredible" (*PL6*, p 19).

Perhaps he suggests that the data I quoted would have been significant if I had only quoted his books profusely. I did not do so because he has done no serious work worth quoting on the subject I was handling. While he is mainly

concerned with the charvak, atheism and its mechanistic materialism, I am dealing with the subject of dialectics and materialism, and idealism in terms of dialectics, which is not exactly the same as atheism. It is natural for him, therefore, to say that "even the data just mentioned are not necessarily relevant for discussion of vedanta dialectic" (*PL*6, p 19).

Can there be a better example of subjective criticism? What have these measurements of his in length and mathematical ratio to do with my main thesis? It is not the number or length of quotations but their content that has to be examined to prove or disprove my main thesis. Would our author treat it as a great piece of wisdom, if it was just loaded with hundreds of pages of quotations? I would not like to waste your time on such frivolous and childish arguments and hence we will leave him to his learned exercise of counting and measuring the authorities I have quoted.

Secondly, I have not made the claim that I have fully discussed the laws of dialectics in this book. In fact I have stated in a number of places, wherever this problem has arisen, that we shall discuss these laws later in my book "Dialectics of Vedanta". So it is very amusing to note that our critic's omniscience has led him even to pass a verdict on my proposed book which is not yet complete and printed and only an advertisement of which appears on the back cover. So he has already declared many of my source material i.e. *Brahmasutra, Yogasutra, Vyasa Bhashyam,* etc. "as clearly irrelevant and some others positively opposed to vedanta philosophy as its authentic exponents wanted us to understand it" (*PL*6, p 19).

It may be true that as far as the Communist Party is concerned, our critic wants it to certify that he is the only authentic exponent of vedanta philosophy and as far as his knowledge is concerned, he considers to base himself on the authentic exponents. We shall discuss it very soon but if what he says is true, then there is nothing for anyone else to do in research or write anything new.

An Erudite Quackery on Vedanta

Hence, before we deal with other points of a secondary nature, the most important point to discuss first is about his knowledge on vedanta. Because he wants the party to believe that his is the most *authentic version* of vedanta philosophy. So let us begin with his profound and fundamental understanding of the source material of vedanta philosophy.

As you are all aware and it is also a common knowledge that *shruti* and *smriti* and other connected literature is the most ancient store of knowledge of ancient India about its history, its life, its culture, its outlook, its people etc., which the country has inherited. It was also considered sacred whether we like it or not. All this literature reflects the development of our society from the most barbaric ancient past in all its forms but that is not our subject here.

Most ancient of these are the *vedas* followed by *aranyakas, brahmanas* and *upanishadas* known as *shruti*. As time passed, this knowledge became unwieldly. Instruments for their preservation were meagre. Hence in every branch of knowledge *sutras* were composed in order to preserve it in the most condensed form. It must however be remembered that at the time the sutras were written, they were correctly understood without any ambiguity about them. They were taught in the tradition of teacher to his pupil. Again with the passage of time, due to the coining of new words in the languages and other factors, these sutras were subjected to interpretation. Thus arose the forms of *vritti, vartika, bhashyas*, etc., as different forms of literature in order to preserve the original content of the sutras. Hence in *Tantra-Vartika*, according to Kumarila Bhatta, a sutra is described as the *yoni* or the main source of knowledge.

Basing himself mainly on the *samhitas* and *brahmanas*, Jaimini composed his *Dharma-mimansa* or commonly known as *Poorva-mimansa* or *Dharmasutra*. Similarly

Badarayana composed his famous work in the field of philosophy known as *Brahma-mimansa* or *Uttar-mimansa* or *Vedanta-mimansa* which is commonly known as *Brahmasutra* and is considered, since then, the most authoritative work of vedanta philosophy.

Now our critic says, "It is surely a shame to read that the texts vedas and upanishads contain nothing but profound and exhaustive philosophical discussions on the origin and development of the universe, when the fact is that even the upanishads which contains protophilosophical discussions are also full of all sorts of relics of primitive belief having nothing to do with the discussions of the origin of the universes. These assertions of the author are below the level of discussion and criticism" (*PL6*, p 31).

It is really incredible to believe that charlatanry coupled with arrogance can make a person refute the things which have been accepted by all without exception. It is true, as I have already said, that they contain everything from the most primitive belief of barbaric stages to philosophical discussions. But it appears that our authentic exponent of vedanta does not even know that as far back as in *Rigveda,* the sage Brihaspati and Parameshti Prajapati have already begun to raise queries for the first time about the philosophical problems of the origin of the universe (Rigved x. 21 and x. 129). This was just the beginning in the earliest record.

Let us see what he says of India's greatest and most authoritative philosophical work—*Brahmasutra.* He writes, "This work consists of cryptic sentences and half sentences amenable to divergent interpretation" meaning the sutras. As I have said, they were not cryptic half-broken sentences at their time as they appear to him today. According to the ancient definition of sutra, they were *alpaksharam*—of few words, *asandigdham*—without any ambiguity, *saravat*—a sum up, and *vishvatomukham* —having *universal applicability* and not half and cryptic and broken sentences as he understands. If they were half,

cryptic and broken, no one in those times would have understood them nor would they have been preserved as authentic works for thousands of years.

From his understanding of the sutras, the foundation of India's knowledge, one will only draw a conclusion that all the composers of the sutras like Badarayana, Jaimini, Patanjali, Panini, Vyasa etc., were a pack of fools writing in half, cryptic and broken sentences. This shows that my critic does not even know or purposely ignores in order to attack me the very basic historical form of our ancient sutra-technique of writing.

Let us proceed to see the wisdom of our friend further. He writes, "it may be useful to be clear about the actual meaning of vedanta which its accredited exponents wanted us to accept" (*PL*6, p 32). Now he is explaining to you the meaning in the style as if it has been directly revealed to him by the god himself for the understanding of the communists! He writes, "Vedanta literally means veda-end (*veda+anta*Q, i.e. upanishads which Indian tradition views as forming the ending portion of vedas (i.e. the *vast samhitas, brahmanakas, aranyakas, upanishad* literature)" (*PL*6, p 32). So a revelation has been brought to us that vedanta means veda-end!

According to the greatest accredited exponent Shankaracharya, *upanishad* means *upa+ni+sad,* meaning secret or sacred knowledge of *brahma-vidya.*

Moreover, in the traditional meaning particularly with reference to 'vedanta philosophy', *anta* does not mean *end* but it means conclusion. When has Shankaracharya told our friend that vedanta means veda-end or upanishad. This may be a simple Oxford dictionary interpretation that end means *anta.* Is this the level any one wants to teach us the accredited vedanta?

Let us proceed further. When I write that Badarayana, Panini, Patanjali, Vyasa and Shankaracharya were all dialecticians, he writes, "here he adds Panini though it is well known that Madhava in *Sarva-Darshana-Samgraha*

treats Panini's philosophy as separate system altogether" (*PL6*, p 33). Must we stoop so low to teach a man who has not even read a word of Panini? Is there any sense in telling him that Panini in his *asthadhyayi* has explained the law of negation of negation most scientifically and has used it in his grammar? Am I to tell him that Patanjali in his great commentary on Panini's work has again elaborately explained this law and has even explained the roots and the formation of the word to denote the *double* process of negation of negation coined for the purpose which, as the records show, was used by Badarayana for the first time in his *Brahmasutra*? And does it mean that if Panini had a separate philosophy, he should not know dialectics? At what level are we discussing vedanta philosophy when volumes are written on this sutra for centuries of which our critic is not even aware! However we must proceed and must examine his profound knowledge which he proudly calls authentic version of vedanta.

Again our critic is shouting hoarse in the most unbecoming language that I am confused about *shruti* and *smriti*. So he wants to enlighten us. According to him *shruti* means *vedas* and *upanishads* which is correct. And *smriti* means "scriptures of secondary order—primarily the law-codes of Manu and others". So according to him *smriti* means law-codes of Manu and others. Since he does not clarify the word "others", I hope that he surely does not include CPC and IPC in the *smriti* literature!! So our learned and authentic exponent of vedanta philosophy does not appear to know more than *Manusmriti*. He may, therefore, be thinking that when Badarayana refers to smriti in *Brahmasutra*, he may be referring to *Manusmriti!* He says it is a shame to read what I write but I am doubly ashamed to read what he is writing and more so when he claims to be a communist. What will the 'primitive' people of India say if they hear that *smriti* in *Brahmasutra* means *Manusmriti*?

Badarayana refers to *smriti* in *Brahmasutra* about half a dozen times such as *smritescha* or *api cha smaryate*

(Br. Su. 1-2-6) which means he refers not to later *Manu-smriti* or any other work of 'secondary nature' but he refers to *Geeta*. This has been amply proved by Shankaracharya and accepted by every Indian scholar for centuries. Do I have to tell this gentleman that *smriti* in the traditional meaning means *Geeta*? It is simply ridiculous.

He further writes, "He declares, 'In Indian history long before the advent of Buddha, creative thinking of vedanta philosophy had ceased because of historical conditions and hence philosophy became a dogma of mere rituals in the hands of the later ignorant brahmins'. This means that Badarayana, and Shankaracharya, Patanjali and Vyasa, our author's greatest authority of vedanta, all belonged to a period before the Buddha. Does our author want us to swallow complete nonsense like this" (*PL*6, p 31).

Before I comment I would first quote what I have written. While discussing the antiquity of India and its knowledge, I wrote: "It is necessary to point out that there is nothing wrong or chauvinistic in being proud of one's own country, its history and civilisation or its culture and heritage. It is well known that theory becomes a dogma when it ceases to be creative. In Indian history, long before the advent of Buddha, *creative thinking* of vedanta philosophy had ceased because of historical conditions and hence the philosophy became a dogma of mere rituals in the hands of the later ignorant brahmins. Such a phenomenon is not unknown even in modern times. Lenin has lucidly explained this phenomenon when he writes that theory without practice is blind and practice without theory is sterile. Thus it is only when ignorance is raised to the point of a theory that social theoreticians begin to confuse between progress and reaction, between advance and retreat, between healthy national pride of the common man and the reactionary chauvinistic tendencies of the obscurantists" (p 43, emphasis added).

Now where are Badarayana, and Shankaracharya, Patanjali and Vyasa? Is there even remote reference to these names in the above paragraph?

How can any one in his senses ask such a question? Does this convey that Shankaracharya lived before Buddha? There should be a limit to distortion and imputing false motives in serious intellectual discussion. It is easy to know why he suppressed the paragraph which I have quoted above and distorted it to say what I have never said.

He further writes, "He does at least partially. He claims that 'the *Brahmasutra* of Badarayana cannot be later than 1400 BC'. Was it intuition then that led Badarayana to foresee the future development of the schools of buddhist philosophy and to refute these in advance" (*PL*6, p 34). It will be at once clear to all that Badarayana, being an unassuming learned philosopher, could not have a stupid intuition that a pseudo-erudite scholar in the middle of the twentieth century would claim to be the accredited and authentic exponent of his *Brahmasutra*.

In asking such a question Chattopadhyaya exposes a pitiable lack of knowledge of the historical stages of the growth of vedanta philosophy. Most of the authoritative Indian scholars in history have established that Panini lived about 1100 to 900 BC. It is also known that Panini knew of *Brahmasutra* known to him then as *Bhikshu-sutras* and also knew *Dharmasutra* of Jaimini from his teacher Upavarshacharya.

Further, in his introduction to *Brahmasutra,* Swami Vireswarananda writes, "In the age immediately preceding Buddha and during his lifetime, there was a great religious and philosophical upheaval in India. From the *Brahmajala-sutras,* we learn that in his time there were as many as sixty-two different schools of philosophy in India" (*Brahmasutra,* p ii). He further writes, "In this connection we must not forget that the author of the *sutras* does not refer to any founder of the different schools by name. He even does not use the technical terms of the different schools as they are known to us today. During that great philosophical ferment which followed at the close of the upanishadic period, various

metaphysical views were held which later developed in definite channels. Therefore, the fact that Badarayana is acquainted with certain systems of thought which later came to be associated with certain names does not show that Badarayana was later than these persons. These later names were by no means the original founders of these systems of thought but only gave definite shape to some particular thought that was found in that mass of philosophical speculations which existed in that period. Badarayana could have anticipated even the buddhist and jain schools, for Buddha and Mahavira also were not the founders of any altogether new schools of philosophy but imbibed much of the thought current in the country at the time" (*Brahmasutra*, p ix).

In his book, Chattopadhyaya himself writes and it is well known to all that in the jaina philosophy, twentythree *thirthankars* had preceded the great Mahavira who is known as the twentyfourth thirthankar. This clearly shows that Mahavira himself was not the founder of jaina school of which he became the most outstanding exponent at a particular stage of social development and which existed *much earlier* to Buddha also. But that buddhist thinking also existed earlier in India and hence refuted in *Brahmasutra*, is not acceptable to modern historians because that upsets the Greak chronology of those who believe that knowledge must begin with Greek thinking and therefore fanatically oppose this view. Hence they ridicule the Indians and ask whether *Badarayana had the intuition to foresee* the future development and refute them in advance in his *Brahmasutra*, and write about me with pride, 'acquaintance with Indian philosophical literature is surely not the strong point of our author' (*PL*6, p 34).

Once again distorting me with all the force at his command, he writes, "After claiming that what Heisenberg says in contemporary physics is already said by vedanta he comments—the ancient vedic philosophers also came to the same conclusion when they named their school of investigation and analysis as *veda* and *anta*, meaning the end

of knowledge" (*PL*6, pp 34-35). So he draws the conclusion, "So vedanta means the end of knowledge, this ultimate and absolute truth—i.e. precisely that which, according to Engels, the dialectical outlook is intended to scrap. Referring to the dialectical outlook, Engels says, 'it once for all dealt the death blow to the finality of all products of human thought and action' (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, p 11)" (*PL*6, p 35).

To see in what reference I said that, let us first see what I wrote:

"Of course, the basis of scientific knowledge, on which Svechnikov writes and refers to modern physics, certainly is not applicable to the vedic concept. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that philosophically, the ancient Indian thinkers had correctly grasped the phenomenon of the universal interaction of matter and defined matter itself as correctly as Heisenberg alone has done after Patanjali and Vyasa.

"Thus we see that the concept of matter, its development in diverse forms, the correct conception of its causality, its highly scientific understanding and its existence in the universal interaction has been perfectly and most scientifically laid down by the vedanta philosophers and which, according to modern science, is the beginning and end of any philosophical analysis of the problem of causality in modern physics. This denotes clearly the high scientific outlook of vedanta, proved and established by modern science and its great historical achievement. On the basis of this knowledge it may also be said that Patanjali was the first philosopher-scientist in the world to give a correct scientific concept of matter and define it and which is confirmed by the modern physics" (p 117).

Does anything warrant such a mischievous conclusion? After discussing the vedic laws, I have referred to the understanding of intrinsic interaction of matter with itself in modern physics of which even Svechnikov writes, "This conception is the beginning and the end in any philosophical analysis of the problem of causality in modern physics."

Now can the world-famous Soviet scientist Svechnikov be interpreted as believing in the *end of knowledge* and *refuting* Engels? But our critic has no courage to quote those sentences where I have explained that finality of the product of human thinking or knowledge was *never* acceptable to the vedic philosophers and for which I have also quoted and explained the famous dictum *neti-neti* which was evolved by them. If what he concludes is correct, then why have I repeatedly quoted Vyasa's dictum *etadvastu jnanasya jneyam* (meaning everthing is knowable to man's intelligence) just as Marxism declared that the *world is knowable*. He is not only ignorant as far as vedanta is concerned but a liar too. Is it my fault if he does not even read what I write? But let us proceed further.

He writes again, "The author declares that the great sage Yajnavalkya defeated all his philosophical rivals who were idealists. This is a plain lie. The upanishads describe him as the greatest idealist philosopher of the age for whom the ultimate reality is just a mass of consciousness (*vijnanaghana*) and who in defence of this extreme idealism, defeats all his philosophical rivals etc." (*PL6*, p 35).

This is a limit of ignorance of *accredited version* and distortion. First of all he does not even know the traditional meaning of the word *vijnana*. He has understood its meaning as mass of consciousness from his buddhist studies in which one of the schools is known as *vijnanavadis* and in which *vijnana* means consciousness.

I have explained in the chapter on vedic concept of matter how the ancient Indians had explained the phenomenon of contradictions in matter or *prakriti* by the inherent forces or property of *satva, raja* and *tama,* for which reason matter was described by them as *prasavadharmini*. Thus according to the vedic tradition, *that which explains the development of matter or prakriti into the multitudinous forms and phenomena is called vijnana,* same as we understand by natural sciences today (Tilak, *Gita Rahasya,* p 156). Another authority like Tarkateertha Lakshmana Shastri Joshi has also clearly explained,

while discussing the discourse of Yajnavalka in the court of Janaka, that Yajnavalkya had defeated all his rival idealists! (Charvaka, *History of Philosophy*, p 7). Forget Gita, Tilak and Joshi who are like mountain eagles for our critic's understanding. But even if he just reads of Sir M. Monier-Williams's *Dictionary of Vedic Language* (p 961) he would realise that his meaning of *vijnana* and *vedanta* is as hollow as his pretensions of its knowledge. He will not understand Indian authorities, hence I have quoted Williams which, I am sure, will satisfy him ! What are we to discuss with such a person ?

If Chattopadhyaya thereby wants to challenge the authority of scholars like Tilak and Tarkateertha Lakshmana Shastri Joshi on the meaning and interpretation of *vijnana* and Yajnavalkya's discourses in the court of Janaka, then I have no objection, but I must state that for me, as far as the accredited exponents of vedanta philosophy are concerned, Tilak and Joshi are far greater authorities than a pseudo-Marxist quack like Chattopadhyaya.

It is impossible to believe that one can boast of one's knowledge of vedanta without knowing even its fundamentals and which run counter to the understanding of accredited exponents such as Shankaracharya and others. Thus we see that his understanding of vedanta is the same common and shallow as can help one to write books called *Indian Philosophy—A Popular Introduction*, fit only for the western market, and which amounts to nothing but carrying coal to Newcastle.

Bankruptcy of Knowledge of Yoga

Take for example his knowledge of yoga. He writes, "As if not satisfied with making Marx, Engels and Lenin the preachers of Golwalkar type of Hindu chauvinism, our author tries the trick of making the Soviet scientists testify to his distortion of Marxism. Let us first see how he distorts Marxism" (*PL*6, p 26).

Then he quotes a passage of mine in which I have

explained that intuition based on knowledge alone can create the genius like Marx, Einstein etc. and draws the conclusion, "So Marx's theory of historical materialism and surplus value, like Lenin's theory of revolution, are nothing but 'brilliant intuitions' which, whatever these mean, excludes revolutionary practices and class struggle. Can any honest Marxist argue like this?" (*PL*6, p 27).

He further quotes different passage of my book on yoga and intuition and finally writes, "If the author mentions this as indicative of the general drift of Soviet science and philosophy, there is no doubt that he is telling a lie. The simple fact is that some years back about a handful of Soviet philosophers showed a tendency to take yoga more seriously than scientific curiosity allows but this tendency is now officially discouraged as unscientific in the Soviet Union. I myself had long discussions on the subject with the friends working in Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences, USSR, and they fully agreed with me that wrong enthusiasm about yoga shown some years back by a few philosophers in the USSR had been of the nature of misfortune'" (*PL*6, p 28).

In spite of his total ignorance of the science of yoga, he is writing in a fashion and draws the conclusion to make anyone believe as if he was the incarnation of Patanjali himself who went to the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow and advised them on yoga which *they also* accepted. But even his own statement quoted above shows that Soviet scientists rejected "*wrong* enthusiasm" about yoga because it did lead to quackery in many places as happened in India also. I have also repeatedly emphasised this in my book if he cares to read and hence what the Soviet scientists have done is correct.

He does not know what yoga means. He does not know that Soviet scientists have accepted the phenomenon of intuition *as a means to superior knowledge*. He does not know what intuition means. He does not know the deliberations of the 1971 Soviet Congress of Scientists and Philosophers and the papers submitted therein in which

the scientists established intuition. He does not know how much brilliant research is being carried on in Soviet science and how many publications are coming out on its study. He does not know anything. All he knows is to advise the Soviet scientists and parade before you that they *accepted* his advice. What to do in such circumstances? Am I to teach a person who wants me to dictate something while he has not learnt the alphabets to write and so I am sorry to say that this is very much below the standard set for our discussion.

In spite of this, let us see his wisdom of yoga. On the authority of Keith, Garbe and others, he writes, "for the primitive magicians indulging in the weird practices and mistaking the hypnotic and catalyptic states thus induced to be states in which great supernatural powers were actually achieved, there was obviously no question of offering any theoretical justification for all this" (*Indian Philosophy,* p 121). Thus we see that his knowledge has not grown beyond the ancient Greeks who understood it as *gymnosophy* or wise gymnasts more than two thousand years ago. By such writing he acknowledges that his knowledge is based on what Keith, Garbe and other great western scholars have studied and that, even being an Indian, he has not read Patanjali and Vyasa, the founders of the science, not to speak of a host of other Indian scholars. It must be said to the credit of western scholars, whether we agree with them or not, that many of them even studied Indian languages in order to have recourse to the original sources of our knowledge, and on whose studies our scholars like our critic parade as authentic exponents and teach the western people again.

On the Authority of Puranas and Ancient Traditions

He abuses me for referring to *puranas* in a particular context of chronology for *Rigveda* which, as is well known, is still a subject of great controversy and diverse opinion (*PL*6, p 28). Dr A. C. Das in his book *Rigvedic India,* for

example, has tried to establish its antiquity by about twentyfive thousand years while Keith says that *Rigveda* cannot be earlier than 1200 BC as the *gathas* of Zoroaster and hymns of the Rigveda are almost exactly the same and the date of Zoroaster cannot be taken back than this (*Sanskrit Literature,* p 219). The contents of these puranas are called by him as "unutterable trash" and uses other vulgar abuses.

But what is Chattopadhyaya's opinion about puranas? I have never said that they are a verified source-material for everything that they mention of history. At the same time I insist that their wholesale rejection is *as unscientific* as their total acceptance by a social historian. But let us see what he has to say about the *puranas.*

While trying to establish the antiquity of the *sankhya* system, he writes, "The attitude expressed in this upanishad to Kapila and his wisdom is fully corroborated by the evidence of the *Mahabharata* and the *puranas.* Whatever might have been the actual date of the redaction of all these texts in their present form, it is impossible to question the fact that these did incorporate extremely ancient Indian tradition" (*Indian Atheism,* p 71). He further writes, "Such an admission by Shankaracharya must have been a grudging one and notwithstanding what he has to say, the *Mahabharata* and the *puranas* indubitably prove not only the great antiquity of *sankhya* but also the stupendous importance which this philosophy enjoyed in the early period" (ibid, p 72). So we see that just in order to hurl abuses at me, he refers to my reference to *puranas* over a full page without even referring to the point in question. It should be remembered that *puranas* were referred by me only when they were found to corroborate the finds of the Assyrian civilisation at the beginning of this century. So again like the ignorant brahmin, as Marx said, my critic *alone* has the right to cite the *puranas* as proof of antiquity and history but if I do it, it is anti-Marxist heresy and sacrilege.

He further writes about me, "He makes the ancient

Indian sages also foretell the future and predict the exact date of the transition to socialism and communism. Believe it or not, this can be found on pp 149-50 which it would be tiring to quote here at length" (*PL*6, p 29).

Let us see what I have written, "I am tempted here to give their working and calculations of the time period for the future development of the society only as a remarkable coincidence of the prophecy of the ancient Indians" (p 149).

What does *tempted* and *remarkable coincidence* mean? Is the coincidence wrong? Moreover is it my fault if the ancient Indians have done it or stumbled on it? If he could not understand the plain thing before him, why should he lose his temper on me for his blindness. If we are really interested in history, we should calmly exchange facts with each other and not hurl stones and abuses. I have only pointed out what the ancient people had said. Neither I nor the ancient sages have called it socialism or communism. In that he is a liar. I have only explained the meaning of *Krita Yuga* as it is explained by Marxist historians today as being the epoch of plenty and happiness and which corroborates with the social memory of the ancient people when they wrote it.

Regarding *shruti, smriti, astic* and *nastic*, about which he is shouting so much, I would like to ask: Are they not part of the traditional literature we have inherited irrespective of the fact whether we like it or not. Is not Manu like Panini a part of this tradition whether we agree with them or not? We all know how Manu interpreted Panini's understanding of *astic* and *nastic* words for his idealistic and feudalistic purposes. It is also referred to in other places such as *Kathopanishad*. I am neither writing the history of language nor commenting on Panini or Manu. They are neither of my making nor is it necessary for us to agree with what they write.

What is Chaitanya

Now what is *chaitanya*? Is it to be translated and under-

stood as only consciousness? Then what is *brahma?* If brahma means consciousness, then what is *chaitanyamaya brahma?* Shall we translate it as *consciousness* full of *consciousness* as he would like us to do? Unless of course he wants to sell the *brahma* as god as the idealist people do. Does he not understand that *chaitanya* is something which according to vedanta philosophy sustains the whole world and because they could not explain what it is, they only described it as that which could not be seen with the eyes and which could not be expressed in words (*Mundokupanishad* 3-1-8). Does he not know that *his* primitive barbaric ancient Indian philosophers are trying to unravel this category everywhere in upanishadic and other literature?

Does he not know how idealist schools such as *vivarta* arise even among the modern idealists of Europe who have been awarded Nobel prizes for their brilliant discoveries in modern science when they say, even after the discovery of electrons and protons, "There appears a large concourse of gross molecules of carbon compound all in motion with great speed. According to the newer theory, we should find even those tiny points of both electron and protons of my table getting dissolved into mere radiation. But what is radiation? Only a series of events of which the last perceptible ones are occurring in my brain. So the concrete reality of my table gets ultimately dissolved into mere radiation of immateriality. Should we say of nothingness! The word radiation in modern physics carries with it no picture of substantiality but only a mathematical formula, a symbol, a ghost of suggestion and ultimately a tag to our own mental fancy."

Can there be any more unscientific philosophical interpretation of modern inventions in science than this which in modern science is known as the school of *energetism* and is vehemently denounced by all Marxist scientists and Soviet philosophers. How is *vivarta* of the barbarian vedantis of ancient India worse than the philosophy of these scientist-philosophers of modern physics?

In fact it would not be wrong to say that *vivarta* represents a point of deadlock, arising out of their implicit faith in the doctrine of dialectics and their dialectical world outlook according to which they were trying to prove the existence of the world from eternity to infinity, in a state of knowledge when scientific investigation *had not even begun* and which is totally lacking in the views of modern scientists of the idealist school. And I have no hesitation to say that if this was known to Marx, Engels or Lenin, they would have scientifically analysed it in its historical setting and explained it as they did in the case of the history of Greek philosophical development instead of rejecting outright its historical significance and existence. Hence I have said that mechanical application of western understanding and methodology to Indian schools will only mislead us and deprive us of our cultural heritage and its scientific understanding.

Marx, Engels & Lenin—The Preachers of Golwalkar's Vedanta.

Now let us look at the charge as to how I make Marx, Engels and Lenin preach Golwalkar's vedanta and brahminical orthodoxy. First we will take Marx.

I had said that Marx had left *a message* for the Indian intellectuals who glorified their heritage without understanding it and that few seem to have taken note of it. So I quoted Marx thus, "if of course you acknowledge beforehand as scientific research only what conforms to your own view, it is not difficult for you to make prophecies; but then what advantage has your assertion over that of the Indian brahmin who proves the holiness of the vedas by reserving for himself alone the right to read it!" (p 51).

In order to distort my quotation, he has not quoted the immediate next sentence in which I wrote, "Marx was indeed too kind to the Indians! It is good that he did not know the secret that we ourselves don't read them, being discarded and disliked by the western masters" (p 52).

Can any person with an iota of honesty explain how I have made Marx preach vedanta and Golwalkar's brahminical orthodoxy here? It only means that Marx was under the wrong impression that the brahmins in India can read them and that it is good that he did not know the secret that the modern educated intellectuals also do not read them under the influence of western education. It is no doubt a bitter truth for Chattopadhyaya, but can our critic deny it?

And if I have done injustice to Marx, it is done by my forgetting to quote the following from Marx in his letters on India. Referring to the Indians, he wrote, "whose country has been the source of our language, our religion and who represent the type of the ancient German in the Jat and the type of ancient Greek in the brahmin" (22 July 1853).

Reading this from Marx, I am sure Chattopadhyaya must run for a shelter to hide himself. And if I had not said that this was from Marx, my learned critic would have surely called this piece as coming from someone of Golwalkar's thinking or from his *Bunch of Thoughts*.

Now let us see his distortion about Engels. While discussing the antiquity of Indian history, I have quoted Engels in which he explains how the early process of personification of natural forces spread among the various people and explains that the process was traced back to its origin in Indian vedas and in its further evolution in all European countries (p 38). But after this, he does not quote what I have written immediately, viz that, "In the light of such brilliant objective analysis of the evolution by Marx and Engels, it is a great pity when Indians, under the influence of bourgeois western scholarship whose sole purpose was to *educate* and *civilise* the eastern people, fight shy of talking of the vedas and feel relieved only after establishing the ancient vedic thinkers after the Greek philosophers and Christ in their chronological sequence." Can anyone draw the conclusion from the

above that Engels has preached vedanta? Is it not a piece of mean distortion?

Now let us see what I wrote about Lenin of which this critic is making so much noise. Emphasising the need to study our ancient heritage, I wrote, "Instead of so succumbing to western influence, it is the duty of every Indian intellectual to study Indian philosophy, try to understand it properly and prove its healthy and rich inheritance or its obscurantic character. Closing our eyes to the reality will only help reaction or ignorant people to monopolise on our history, tradition and civilisation, depriving the Indian people of a wholesome repast at the table of their own culture" (p 39).

After this, in order to emphasise the importance of our studies of ancient literature, I quoted how Lenin explained to Oldenburg the importance of studying ancient Indian history and literature. I don't think anyone of my readers will agree with my critic's interpretation that I have made Lenin preach vedanta, unless a person is bent upon maligning me.

So you will see these are the three main examples quoted most hypocritically by my critic to prove his lie, that I have converted Marx, Engels and Lenin into preachers of vedanta. I consider it the limit of purposeful slander and lack of intellectual integrity.

Similarly while explaining the historically-established fact that even diametrically opposite schools such as idealistic and materialistic peacefully coexisted in India, I wrote, "It is this fundamental distinction which distinguishes vedanta philosophy from all the philosophies of the world. It is this qualitative distinction which also answers the sphinx-like mystery which has been perplexing the western world ever since they began to study vedanta philosophy and the Indian civilisation for the past few centuries, a mystery expressed by Max Muller that the great merit of vedanta philosophy was that even diametrically opposite schools like idealist and materialist peacefully coexisted in Indian history for thousands of years,

held discussions and even conferences and did not behead each other's heads as is seen in Greece, Rome and all through Christian and Muslim history till we come to the modern period in which they do not behead but ostracise" (p 22). In the footnote I have asked the readers to refer to Engels's introduction to *Dialectics of Nature*. It should be noted that I have not given any page number in order that if the reader reads the whole introduction, he will realise how people were executed, burnt and even roasted alive on fire till recently in Europe whenever they put forward new views which ran counter to the orthodox church. In his introduction, Engels has given us names of such inventors and the punishments while discussing their viewpoints. It is only ignorance which can make a person say that I have converted Engels into a preacher of vedanta and that "in this introduction Engels has nothing to say about India or Indian philosophy" (*PL* 6, p 26).

A Perverted Review

This sums up the socalled review of my book by a person who calls it authoritative version of vedanta philosophy. As you will see, this is a critique of only the introduction to my book, but there is not a single word about the main thesis which I have expounded in the book. As you have seen I did not set out to write about *vedanta* or *atheism* or any type of history of Indian philosophy. I have referred to them only whenever it was necessary as a background material to explain my theories. And what do these theories contain?

I have proved that Patanjali was the first thinker in the world who had proved the *materiality* of time and the *relativity* of space and time more than 2000 years before Einstein could establish it in this century. Patanjali and Vyasa proved this as scientifically and in the same langauge as it is explained and understood with the aid of modern natural sciences.

It is a very serious matter over which we must think

as to why Chattopadhyaya and others do not say a word about this main question. In accordance with his highly-cultured style, he could at least call it "all muck and bunk" but there is total silence. The silence is more serious at a time when the first Indian satellite named *Aryabhata* is proudly hovering over his head and the book in his hand tells him that the relativity of space and time was proved by Patanjali whom he considers nothing but "a sophisticated primitive barbarian" in the chapter on yoga in his book *Indian Philosophy*. He has proved that he was not even a philosopher to be taken note of. He has further put forward theories that he was not even the founder of Yo*gasutra* but only its editor. You can understand now why he lost his balance in writing the review. But this is only one reason.

Why so? Firstly, because western philosophers like Gough, Keith, Garbe and others hold that view.

Secondly, because he is unable to bring forward any Greek name of the ancient time because they had never understood it.

Thirdly, because Marx or Engels have not said it.

His knowledge of history or philosophy does not teach him how such a theory could arise at all, in the absence of the development of modern natural sciences. But it did and that is no fault of mine. So he is silent about a thing which is the main theoretical part of my thesis. If he had read Engels or modern scientific research in the Soviet Union, he would have found how brilliant scientific predictions can be done by philosophers with their intuitive approach and knowledge, which *later on get confirmed* by the advance of natural sciences. I need not go into details here except to point out how blind and subjective is the approach of my critics. In vedanta, it is said of such people that if you cannot see a pillar, it is not the fault of the pillar!

Denigrating our own heritage and our philosophers as primitive barbarians at the alter of western knowledge of Indian history and civilisation, may help to win laurels

from western countries and universities at the cost of one's own selfrespect and national honour. But such an attitude will never help the cause of our own people or revolution except to expose the servility of our dogmatists to western bourgeois ideology and influences.

Issues of Fundamental Nature

This raises a few fundamental questions that obsess our authors like Chattopadhyaya and Dr Adhikari, i.e. why do I not accept their viewpoint that dialectics is the monopoly of buddhist philosophy. He says, "But why is this anxiety to deny dialectics in buddhism where it is most prominent in Indian philosophical heritage. One reason for this is that our author is not prepared to allow full philosophical status to buddhism because it does not have scriptural sanction in the sense of brahminical orthodoxy" (*PL* 6, p 31). Imputing such mean motives of scriptural sanction to the study of buddhism cannot help our friends to establish the superiority of buddhist dialectics, nor can it help to establish their wisdom.

Why does he say so and what are the sources? Does he base his question on his critical study of vedanta? The first thing he quotes in substantiating his thesis is a statement from Engels that dialectical thought is to be found at a comparatively high stage of development amongst buddhist and Greeks and attains its full development much later etc. (*PL* 6, p 30).

The answer is simple. First of all it has to be accepted that buddhist dialectics is at a much lower level compared to the vedic school which can be convincingly proved and which is not yet explained by anyone in the sense of presenting it as dialectics in modern way.

Secondly, as far as the source-material of history was available to Marx and Engels in translated form at their time, it was not as comprehensive as to give them a full picture of Indian philosophical schools.

Thirdly, buddhist literature was available to the west

much more in advance because of the historical fact that buddhism had embraced the whole of the Asian continent for centuries.

Fourthly, and what is of great significance, is that buddhism represents one of the greatest revolutionary social upheavals in history of mankind like christianity and islam also and to which Marx and Engels have referred as 'turningpoints'. Hence when Engels refers to it, it is not for its dialectics, whatever may be its stage of development, but for its great revolutionary and social significance. Hence, it would be misleading if we make a *fetish* of a reference to its dialectics by Engels and refuse to see the reality. It is for this reason also we find that Soviet studies on indology before and after the revolution mainly begin with buddhism and not vedanta which preceded buddhism. Hence we Indian Marxists with a few exceptions like Dange, Damodaran etc. also followed the same path of study and research.

Fifthly, Chattopadhyaya thinks that nothing can exist anywhere, if he does not know it. We will have another occasion to discuss what it means but his ignorance cannot be an excuse for his downright distortions.

Hence we should understand that as far as the material that was available to Engels, in his time, what he has said is correct and cannot be challenged. But that does not bar the discovery of new data or its validity, if it does not contradict but amplifies further the conclusion already drawn.

My main argument is that vedanta philosophy is not only based on dialectical outlook but even developed it further in the *Brahma-Vidya*. My question is why this stubborn fanaticism, almost religious, to deny the existence of dialectics in vedanta? I say never mind if it was not known so far to you. I don't also deny that other Indian schools may not have developed it? But what is wrong if it is found to exist in whatever stage of development in vedanta schools also? Are we religious exponents of any particular sect that we must fight for establishing our own doctrine? Or are we treating the writings of Marx and Engels as revealed

scripture like the vedas or like the Holy Bible and the Quran?

For example, I would ask our reviewer a question which would help to understand my point. What doctrine or laws exist in vedanta philosophy to explain and understand the world processes and phenomena? Our critic's answer obviously is that they have nothing. Why so, because his acquaintance of vedanta will tell him that the world is *maya* and *mithya,* i.e. an illusion. Since it does not exist, the question of laws and the development etc. have no relevance in vedanta. But I can show that dialectics is discussed not only by the *sankhyas* but has been accepted and wonderfully discussed in *Brahmasutra* and by all philosophers of vedanta schools also, right up to Shankaracharya and our time like Tilak. Naturally therefore, when I discuss vedanta dialectics I have absolutely no hesitation in taking into consideration not only Patanjali and Vyasa but also Badarayana and Shankaracharya. When I am trying to discuss dialectics, it does not in any way mean that I accept each and every word of the superstitious, unscientific thinking that is also written in the name of vedanta or other Indian schools.

It is for this reason you will see my critic accusing me of creating utter confusion about *sankhya* and *advaita.* Since he does not know the basic fundamentals of vedanta and its terminology and is only acquainted with buddhism, such virulent attacks bordering on vulgarity are inevitable and I would not mind that. In fact he is the wrong person to discuss it with.

I again repeat, every vedic philosopher has made dialectics the cardinal point of his discussion without which the reading and understanding of vedanta will not only be futile but will lead to the ridiculous conclusion that it is mystic and speculative thinking and to its logical conclusion that they were a pack of fools as Hegel has said. We cannot join that crowd and make it more mystic.

That dialectics of *sankhya* and *yoga* was accepted by the *advaita* thinkers for the purpose of understanding the

world has to be understood by us as a precondition to assessing my book. This is also the fundamental of vedanta philosophy. He does not know that Sarvajnyat Mahamuni has clearly established this in his work *Sankshepashariraka*m. He has clearly explained that *parinamavada* of the *sankhya* is the background or *purvabhoomi* of *vivarta*. It is not only against *vivarta* but it is conducive to *vivarta* as far as the knowledge of the world is concerned (S:2-61). At the moment we are not concerned whether dialectics is idealist or materialist. We shall discuss it later.

We, therefore, clearly see that as far as dialectical interpretation of the world and its development by the *sankhya* and *yoga* is concerned, it is fully acceptable to *advaita* philosophy. Hence it should be noted that *Brahmasutra*, which rejects the *arambha-vada* and *sanghata-vada* of Kanada and buddhist school has accepted the dialectics of *sankhya* and *yoga* and *at the same time* refuted their philosophy. Our author is terribly confused about it and is unable to understand it because this was never taught by any western school. Also because it is new for him.

This only means that *Brahmasutra* refutes the *dvaita* of *prakriti* and *purusha* concept as unrealistic and unscientific and accepts their doctrine of *parinama-vada*.

Refutation of *sankhya* and *yoga* should not be mechanically and dogmatically understood as their wholesale rejection. Our author is totally ignorant of these fundamentals and hence we find him insisting on me to accept his buddhist dialectics. The naive dialectics of Buddha of which he writes, followed by Heraclitus as the sign of his positive dialectics is not the reflection of their original wisdom but reflects the ignorance of the post-vedic period about that doctrine.

Does he not know that *Bhagavata Purana* informs us that *Mahabharata* and *Geeta* were written by Vyasa for the common parlance (meaning women and sudras) within a period of a thousand years after the Mahabharata war. The reason given by *Bhagavata* is that at that time even the

custodians of knowledge were forgetting the knowledge of vedas etc. Historically it only means that doors were thrown open to common people because till then the vedic knowledge was restricted only to brahmins. The need was felt to restore what was being forgotten and getting extinct. It was not a great favour that Vyasa did to oblige the common people as the writer of *Bhagavata* says, but it was the urgent need to preserve their knowledge, after the great massacre and holocaust of the war. This shows partly how much was lost or destroyed by the time of Buddha.

I will put it in another way. What is the mysterious relationship between the *sankhya* and *advaita?* If *sankhya* is refuted by *vedantis,* then how do we solve the mystery of Krishna calling himself an incarnation of Kapila in *Geeta?* Is not refutation as understood by Chattopadhyaya and incarnation as understood by *Geeta,* a contradiction in itself? What is the answer? Or shall we say that it was a compromise between the two diametrically opposite schools and if so, what was the point of compromise? According to him there is no point of compromise because he knows only superficially that sankhyas were refuted by *Brahmasutra.* This is what I call 'superficial acquaintance of vedanta philosophy'.

Again, how do we answer a peculiar controversy in Indian philosophy as to whether *Geeta* is based on sankhya school?. That it is a blending of both, *in the style of their time,* is not understood clearly, because the point of blending between the two schools has been lost sight of. It is far beyond Chattopadhyaya because this controversy takes place amongst Indian scholars and not in Europe!

Hence it should be remembered that *advaita* school having retained the dialectics of *sankhya* and *yoga,* rejected the *dvaita* of *prakriti* and *purusha.* If we do not understand this, then the above confusion will only present an insoluble mystery of the vedic thinkers.

We can understand it better if we see that same phenomenon has been repeated in the 19th century in a different setting and a different plane of thinking. When Marx

admired Hegel, he did not admire him for his unscientific philosophy. He took Hegel's doctrine of dialectics which was idealistic, turned it upside down, converted it into a universal doctrine of nature and society and rejected Hegel's idealist philosophy. Once we understand this, many insoluble mysteries and problems facing us in vedanta for centuries will no more defy solution.

As we know Marx himself does not deny Hegel's contribution to his own thinking. Similarly, the ancient *advaita* philosophers do not deny the contribution of the dialectical doctrine by Kapila while rejecting his *dvaita*. It is for this reason Lord Krishna calls himself the incarnation of Kapila in *Geeta* as a mark of respect and deep reverence for that great thinker and yet rejected his *advaita* as unscientific. It does not however mean that advaita is Marxism and there is no need to study Marxism as some of my critics have written.

By rejecting the *dvaita* in the concept of the eternity of *prakriti* and *purusha* of the sankhyas, the *advaitis* accomplished a synthesis of the two in the *prakriti* form, in the unity of the opposites, a dialectical unity, of *para-prakriti* and *apara-prakriti,* which was essentially a correct concept, in its content and form, and explained the further evolution of the world on the basis of dialectical development as explained by the *parinami*-science. This represents a higher stage in the evolution of their thinking and understanding the world, as compared to the sankhyas.

Brahma which also meant the eternal and infinite universe, *anadi* and *ananta,* thus was equated to the *apara-prakriti,* later distinguished as the *karya-brahma.* But when it came to proving the *amritatvam* and *avyayatva* or the eternity and inexhaustibility of this brahma on the basis of the law of dialectics, they could not do it. In their stage of understanding and in the absence of natural sciences, they thought the *brahma* would *cease to exist* eternally by the law of qualitative transformation or *guna-parinama* like the milk transforming into curd.

This difficulty was genuine, for which the *sankhyas* had

to freeze all further discussion. But the *advaitis* would not stop at that. Hence in order to satisfy the laws of dialectics, they invented the phenomenon of *vivarta* from nature itself in addition to the laws of quantitative and qualitative transformation and imposed it on the *brahma*. Thus on the one hand, they got rid of the insurmountable difficulty posed by the laws of dialectics and on the other proved the indestructibility of *brahma* on its basis and at the same time attributing all the properties of *sankhya prakriti* to *maya*. This also opened up the way for the development of the idealist school for those who only stuck to *vivarta* by raising the *brahma* to another abstract category of *para-brahma* by equating it to the *para-prakriti*.

It is amusing to read these beautiful discussions, arguments and counterarguments of those ancient philosophers in vedanta philosophy going on for thousands of years in their efforts to comprehend this universe and prove its existence on the basis of the laws of dialectics, which they would not give up under any circumstance and if we do not lose sight of the time in man's hoary past when they were discussing it, then any Marxist in the world, whether Indian or non-Indian, would feel proud of these ancient thinkers and admire them for their intellectual brilliance. We, Indian Marxists, instead of rejecting them as primitive barbarians, should have special reason to take up its investigation, research and owe its explanation to the world of philosophy because it is as much our own heritage as of the entire mankind.

How and at what stage this happened, is necessary for us to examine. But that such an inquiry is necessary is proved by *Geeta* itself.

Hence I wrote in my book that, "Mysticism of the vedanta philosophy is an attribute of the ignorants and quacks, both Indian and western, ancient and modern alike" (p 49), which our critic would not quote for obvious reasons!

It is his total ignorance which makes him charge that I have totally confused the different schools of vedic tradi-

tions. For the same reason he is also confused about *brahma, maya, vivarta* etc. of the *advaitis* and its interrelationship with *prakriti* and *purusha* of the *sankhya* and *yoga*. When philosophy is not studied as a continuous long-drawn process of reflecting the evolution of thinking of any people, irrespective of their schools, and is taken up only as individual thought processes bound in watertight compartments of those schools, it becomes not only a fundamental repudiation of the scientific outlook of Marxism but a sure way of getting utterly confused. Once such confusion grips the mind then the only way to hide one's ignorance and unscientific approach is to ridicule the vedic philosophers as revelling in unbridled madness and attribute mysticism to their thinking.

Second fundamental question that is upsetting our critics is how can a high scientific outlook be developed in the period when the level of productive forces was comparably very low. As a result, they are even not prepared to refer to the theories I have explained in my book. Chattopadhyaya and Dr Adhikari have reviewed all the chapters in one line that the Sanskrit quotations are 'irrelevant'. I expected a better deal from Adhikari being a student of physics. But he has only endorsed what Chattopadhyaya has stated and Chattopadhyaya as we have seen is totally ignorant.

The question is, why are they silent? Why are they refusing to see the reality that Patanjali has explained the greatest revolutionary theory that *time is material* and that time is inseparably interconnected with motion in matter. Why are they so dogmatically afraid of even referring to it and seeing the reality? Because those theories are the main content of my book and not so much the introduction about which they are making so much noise? There may be mistakes in writing which can be corrected.

Hence without going into details about it here since they do not want to see it, I will only inform them that a *scientific world outlook is possible* even in the pre-Marxist philosophies. A. D. Litman, while reviewing the mater-

ialist traditions in Indian philosophy investigated by Anikeyev, writes, "the author has come to the conclusion that the materialist tradition of ancient India confirm the temporary scientific materialist world outlook" ("Studies in the Socio-Political and Philosophical Thought of India", 1974, p 50). It should be noted that he is referring here to only *sankhya* school.

I am sure this will help our comrades to see the reality and read my chapter to find out how could a scientific world outlook, may be temporary, be evolved and established without the corresponding development of productive forces. I will not go into that question now though I will write on it later.

Misrepresentation By Dr Adhikari

I am sorry for Dr Adhikari for denying everything by calling it questionable translation. What surprises me most is his denial that Soviet scientists are investigating *intuition* on a scientific basis. He denies that psychotronics has been established in the Soviet Union. I can assure him that my knowledge of psychotronics is not a fiction of my brain but I have learnt it from Soviet scientists and I can also prove it. Even then it is necessary to examin his stand.

What are the grounds on which Dr Adhikari rejects the thesis that the ancient Indian philosophers had thought of time, space, motion and their inseparable interrelationship? It is indeed interesting to see how dogmatism blinds us to realities in every field. After writing at length that objective conditions and their corresponding development did not exist then, which of course is true, he quotes Engels thus, "On the other hand, dialectical thought—precisely because it presupposes investigation of the nature of concepts themselves—is only possible for man, at a comparatively higher stage of development (buddhists and Greeks), and it attains its full development much later still through modern philosophy—and yet we have the

colossal results already among the Greeks which by far anticipate investigation!" (*PL* 7, p 33).

Dr Adhikari then comments, "There is no reason to believe that the knowledge of empirical science which ancient Indians had in the days when vedantic philosophy emerged was any higher than that possessed by the Greeks *in the same period. Alberuni* in his travelogue says: 'In former times, the Hindus used to acknowledge that the progress of science due to the Greeks is much more important than that which is due to themselves.' (Alberuni's *India,* Sechau edition, I-22-23)" (ibid).

Why is there no reason? Because he has the authority of Alberuni for that. Right, let us grant that authority. Then what? Then he writes, "Therefore without going into any of the Sanskrit texts quoted by the author and their doubtful interpretations by him, *we reject* the fantastic claim of the author that vedanta philosophy contains ideas of space, time and matter which anticipate those of modern physics and *contains dialectics which is* equal to *that of Marx and Engels*" (ibid).

But what about the Sanskrit quotations I have given from the original texts of Patanjali and Vyasa wherein they explain the concept of time, concept of atom, and establish that *time is material* by explaining it in terms of motion, and without any ambiguity. Those Sanskrit *sutras* are not my creation. And yet you pass the verdict that there is no reason to go into those texts. If my meaning is wrong, you or anyone certainly can explain but what right you have to brush them aside? Does it mean that it is a sacrilege to do any new research?

Why then think, why study, why do research and why bother about all that? Does it mean that all that we communists have do is to criticise the brahmin for his blind faith in the vedas or his *vedapramanyam.* Poor Marx, Engels and Lenin spent their life-time in combating such an attitude of *vedapramanyam* among the communists as not only being un-Marxist but positively anti-Marxist.

From this it is clear that but for a stray reference to the comparative development of dialectics in buddhism in the works of Engels, our Marxists would have certainly rejected its existence in buddhism also if someone had discovered it later. Is it for me to remind here that even Marx and Engels had castigated many "Marxists" for making a fetish of economic factor in their outlook towards history and for producing much nonsensical rubbish called "Marxist literature"? But we shall discuss it later.

Dr Adhikari further writes, "Similarly we have no evidence of 'psychotronics' being developed as a 'science' in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, we have seen in the March 1975 issue of *Sputnik* from Moscow an article by a Soviet scientist exposing by practical experiments the fraud of psychotronics."

Well, I can assure our learned comrade that I have in my hand right now an article distributed by the Soviet newsagency explaining the new branch of psychotronics established in the Soviet Union and that it is not my invention. Moreover, I have checked up and there is no such article in the March 1975 issue of *Sputnik* quoted by Dr Adhikari.

He further writes, "His jibe at Mahapandit Rahula Sankrityayana and Dr Kosambi, who did scholarly work in expounding Indian materialism, is in bad taste," (*PL7*, p 37).

Before I comment, let us see what I said in my book: "It is such erroneous views of the Indian philosophy which led many of our thinkers like Mahapandit Rahula Sankrityayana, Dr Kosambi and others to prepare a chronology of all vedic philosophers except Kapila Muni having lived after the birth of Christ. Placing Kapila Muni after Pythagorus thus completed the Indian chronology satisfactorily to establish the western superiority with Buddha as the fountainhead. But these scholars apparently do not know that Ashvaghosha, the ancient biographer of Buddha, informs us that Ardacharya, who was the teacher

of Buddha, belonged to the sankhya school of which Kapila Muni was the founder. It is not possible to discuss it here. But certain facts have to be mentioned in passing in refutation of such fallacious theories and tendencies" (pp 24-25).

It clearly means from the above that Dr Adhikari must place Pythagorus before Buddha if he is serious about his line of thinking. Besides Dr Adhikari has not even bothered to find out as to which Dr Kosambi I have referred. If he had cared to see the bibliography of my book, he could have found that I have referred to Dr Dharmanand Kosambi's work published as early as 1935, and who was the father of Dr D. D. Kosambi, the well-known Marxist scholar, historian and mathematician. So we see that facts have no relevance in the whole criticism of my book.

Let us now come to Rahulji and my jibe at him. Let me tell you that ever since I began to read Marxist literature during my early school days, I was very much impressed by Rahulji's erudition and scholarship and I cherish the same memory even today. I may also tell you that I had the unique privilege to meet him later and on his invitation, I had even spent a few days in his company in his beautiful bungalow in Mussouri. But does my respect for him mean that I should not differ with him on any point of detail? It is a great irony of fate that Dr Adhikari should take the opportunity to misrepresent me for having shown disrespect to the memory of that great scholar while he, as one of the prominent members of the politbureau of the CPI in the old days, was responsible for Rahulji's resignation and subsequent exit from the party itself!

Appalling Ignorance

And now I would come to the most ridiculous part of the criticism in the *Party Life*. According to our friend Chattopadhyaya, "It is below the standard to read" that ve-

danta philosophy consists of nyaya, vaisheshika, sankhya, yoga etc.

It is true that *advaita* or *vivarta* school, of all the vedic schools which held the most dominant and powerful sway over the minds of our people for centuries, has generally come to be identified as *vedanta school.* Those who are acquainted with vedic literature have no confusion about it. But while discussing philosophy, each school is identified by different names because of their differing views, some being diametrically opposite too. Thus we have *nyaya, vaisheshika, sankhya, yoga, purva-mimansa* and *uttar-mimansa,* the last being also known as *vivarta* or *advaita.*

Even Chattopadhyaya writes in his book *Indian philosophy—A Popular Introduction,* that they are all vedic schools but he draws the erroneous conclusion that all schools except the vedanta are vedic schools. It is because of his deriving a wrong connotation of the word vedanta as veda+end or the ending portion of the vedas meaning the *upanishad* or *advaita* school. Even such erroneous views are not an originality of our learned critic! He has taken it from a few western scholars and some Indians too.

But as I have pointed out that *anta* in Sanskrit does not mean end but it means conclusion, essence or quintessence. This is explained even by Shankaracharya in his commentary on *Geeta* (*Geeta Bhashya,* 2-16). Hence all the schools are essentially *vedic* and they are *also vedantis* in so far as they are the conclusions or essence of the vedas in the form of different schools. But our friend insists on calling it *veda-end* and makes a mockery of Indian philosophy when he expects the party to swallow this nonsense.

According to our pandit, we shall have no right to call the ancient philosophers as vedanta philosophers. Knowledge of Indian tradition is not a very strong point of our critic. He has learnt his *veda-end* from authoritative western scholars. He claims to have read (in English) Sayana-Madhava's *Sarva-darshana-sangraha.*

Hence it would be worth while to refer to the same in order to expose how he distorts even authentic commentaries.

It is clearly stated therein that vedic philosophy is divided into two parts, viz *shrauta* and *tarka*. Shrauta is subdivided into *poorva* and *uttar mimansa* and tarka is further subdivided into *nyaya, vaisheshika, sankhya, yoga* etc. It is again made clear that *vedantis are of two kinds*, viz *dvaita* and *advaita* and that Madhvacharya and Ramanuja belong to *dvaita* group while Shankaracharya belongs to *advaita* school. It is further stated that Panini belongs to *shrauta* or *vivarta* school (*Sarvadarshana Sangraha* by Sayana-Madhava with an original commentary in Sanskrit published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1924, p 118).

What is wrong with our friend! Is he blind or ignorant? Can he not understand the meaning of "vedantis are of two kind" (*vedantinascha dvividha dvaitavadina-advaitavadinascha*)? It is indeed tiring to deal with such a person parading as a great scholar of Indian philosophy! What will be the result of such an enlightenment to our people! We have to take a serious note of it.

Because, when it comes to the question of discussing *brahma* and the laws of creation and existence on the basis of dialectics, all the vedic schools are again subdivided into three main schools, viz *arambhi*, which comprises of *nyaya* and *vaisheshika; parinami*, which comprises of *sankhya* and *yoga;* and *vivarta* i.e. *advaita* school. Traditionally, therefore, Madhvacharya represents the *arambhi* school, Ramanuja represents the *parinami* school and Shankaracharya represents the *vivarta* school and *yet all* are vedanta schools of philosophy only to be distinguished by their individual names.

Hence it will be seen that according to our learned critic, you will have no right to qualify Madhva and Ramanuja as vedanta philosophers. Similarly he will not allow you to call Swami Vivekananada also a vedanta philosopher be-

cause according to him he was a yogi! I would be very anxious to know the results if Chattopadhyaya, *the great vedantist,* dares tell the people of Bengal that Vivekananda was not a vedanta philosopher! Such ignorance arises because he has closed his eyes and refuses to see dialectics in other philosophical schools of India because he does not find sanction for it either in any buddhist scripture or in the writings of any western philosophers.

Lastly, I would state again that I can prove that the knowledge of dialectics had travelled from India to Europe and therefore I have no hesitation to say that the world *perhaps* could have been without it had the Indians not preserved it also. It does not mean that it may never have been developed again, but, for the present state of our knowledge, there is no doubt that it originated in India. But that is not our subject now.

Need for a Positive Outlook

It is the highest perversity and denial of Marxism, when any research in our country's history, culture, philosophy and any positive appreciation of its past accomplishments by a communist is denounced as chauvinism, revivalism, betrayal of the working class and what not!

If such men were in charge of our country's science and technology, what would they have done when our first satellite was launched with the help of Soviet Union and was proudly named Aryabhata after the name of the great Indian mathematician and astronomer of the Nalanda university? Would they have called it revivalism and Hindu chauvinism of the Golwalkar type? I may also inform you that Aryabhata was a *kshatriya* and not a *brahmin* lest some revolutionaries accuse Indira Gandhi of brahminical chauvinism as many of them are already doing!

Moreover, if I were to suggest after this discovery, that the second satellite be named after Patanjali who was the first man in recorded history to prove the materiality of

time before Einstein, most probably, I would be burnt at the stake!

And yet I would maintain that it is the philosophy of Marx and Engels which enables me to discover it because I am seriously endeavouring to apply the essence of dialectical materialism—no doubt as I understand it.

I would, therefore, request again that the party should take a more positive view of our history, our culture, our civilisation, our whole heritage and should not be influenced by the criticism of some political-demagogues and pettifogging philistines according to whom "objectively, it along with the foreword (of Chairman S. A. Dange) helps the class enemies in their attack on Marxism-Leninism, lowers the prestige of the party etc." You can certainly criticise the book as you think fit. There may be shortcomings and mistakes too. But cheap demagogy, however put in Marxian words, is no answer to a new and serious study. I am sure none of these comrades have been able to controvert a single point of the chairman's preface and its bearing on ideological and social history. Hence we should disregard such irresponsible comments of people who perhaps are not even aware of their chairman's contribution and its recognition in different fields the world over.

As regards Marxism, they know as much as the Indian brahmin who recites the vedas without understanding its meaning and essential content as Marx said. Such people have taken to Marxism by breaking away their bonds with their national past and its heritage. They have embraced Marxism like Feuerbach, who, as the German proverb says, while breaking away from the supreme idealism of Hegel, emptied out the baby along with the bath-water. It is necessary therefore for us to empty out the bath-water of all nonsensical superstition, full of mysticism and idealism and carry with us the baby of real content, the gains and achievements of our ancient philosophical thinking, tradition and heritage.

Enough harm has been done to Marxism-Leninism in

our country by some dogmatists and petty-bourgeois careerists who make their tenure safe only by maligning every small or big leader on the mass front. These comrades apparently underestimate the importance of ideological education and philosophical outlook in social revolution. Revolution is not an abstract concept but is born out of the objective conditions which are in turn determined not only by economic and political conditions but also by social, cultural and historical forces and their influences. Revolution is also not born out of mere erudition of any philosophy and fortified by its quotations. however great and scientific it may be. Revolution is born from the native soil of each country, influenced by the local historical conditions and cultural makeup of its people and its process is only to be accelerated by Marxists by a conscious understanding of Marxist philosophy and its world outlook.

Thus I would again draw your attention to my book where, in order to emphasise the importance of philosophy, I have quoted Marx thus, "As philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat; so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapon in philosophy" (p 159).

Lastly in conclusion, I would like to say that I have only tried to have a fresh look at vedanta philosophy, which has influenced our country and people for centuries—by divesting it of its mystical and obscurantist understanding. Hence those who think that the source-material of my thesis is meagre and the treatment shallow betray a lack of basic understanding of the structure of Indian philosophical literature and its content and fundamentally confuse between vedanta, the vedic and nonvedic philosophies of India. In fact the thesis, in a new presentation, intends to demolish as much the traditional viewpoint of vedanta as being merely mystic and speculative as our shallow understanding which equates vedanta to all reactionary and obscurantist thinking, lacking any rational content.

As I have already written in the introduction that the subject being entirely new, I would not deny my critics

the right to criticise it or point out the errors that have crept in. But I deny emphatically that my work is an expression of revivalism and chauvinism.

It is most unfortunate that I have had to say this even before a genuine and well-informed criticism of the book has taken place. A hurried and politically-motivated review cannot be a base for scientific discussion of a philosophical question which I am introducing for the first time. I did not even have enough time to prepare for this meeting.

Importance of Philosophy in Education

This raises some important questions about our education having direct bearing on this controversy. The party has set up an education department which is conducting education all over the country. Some years back I informed the party officially that one of the brilliant textbooks on Marxism-Leninism, viz A. Afanasyev's *Marxist Philosophy* has been most flippantly translated into Marathi by a comrade who perhaps merely took it as a job. I requested the party to look into it but nothing came of it.

The translator did not seem to be acquainted with the philosophy since he has committed the same grave errors against which Marx and Engels had to wage a bitter fight. The book has exactly turned the Marxist philosophy upside down. For example, it was the practice of the idealists in the 19th-century Europe to translate or interpret the process of *negation* as *destruction* and then attack Marxist philosophy. In the book in question, negation has been translated by the translator as *destruction* and hence the law of negation of negation has been translated as "destruction of destruction". Such erroneous understanding of Marxist philosophy destroys in essence the fundamental basis of the philosophy and its scientific edifice.

But the party refused to take note of it in spite of several attempts of mine. I wrote an article in the party journal *Yugantar* and which was also printed in a local daily but to no avail. In this article I had pointed out how Marx and

Engels fought against the idealists and reactionaries of their time for such distortion and substantiated it with the quotation from Engels in which he warned against understanding of *negation* as *destruction.*

In the same article I also pointed out how the same 19th-century phenomenon arose in Indian philosophy and Shankaracharya took up cudgels against those such as buddhists who misinterpreted the process of negation as destruction. It would be interesting to note that such misconception and distortion of the fundamental law of vedanta dialectics was not permitted even by Shankaracharya although a supreme idealist himself! And it would be interesting to note that the example given by Engels in explaining and countering such attempts is also exactly the same which Shankaracharya gave more than a thousand years ago. This does not mean that Engels copied it from *Shankar-Bhashya* although it may tempt any chauvinist to say so.

It is a serious matter that the party still refuses to discuss or look into it although it is more than three years now. What is all the more surprising is that the central secretariat at Delhi which could understand my Marathi articles on yoga and ban the publication of my researches in the party journal three years ago, could not know of this article wherein I explained about Afanaseyev's book. What is the reason? Is this our seriousness about education? Or is it because it was pointed out by me?

Hence I would like to emphasise that such subjective and cavalier attitude towards education is positively dangerous for the healthy growth of the party in our country as a vanguard to lead the people on the path of socialism.

I would further make it clear that neither the book nor its preface was presented as an official view of the party, nor was its sale by the PPH, which is now banned, could be an indication of party authorisation because PPH does not sell only those books which contain the authorised views of the party. The party's order to ban the sale of the book was therefore most undemocratic.

My Mistakes

It is true that there are some mistakes and shortcomings in my book, because I relied on memory while writing the introduction and did not refer to my notes such as follows:

(1) By mistake, I mentioned Kant instead of Schopenhauer. I am thankful to Chattopadhyaya for pointing it out.

(2) I have called Alexander an Ionian king instead of Macedonian. This mistake was also pointed out by my daughter, who is studying in school, immediately after the book was printed. But I have no objection in conceding the point to our learned professor. But as you will see, this has nothing to do with my main book nor it affects anything I have written.

(3) Similarly I also agree that in the formulation that "*Marx unfurled the flag of vedanta*", some misunderstanding is possible and I should have been more careful. It is likely to create the impression that everything that vedanta contains such as *varnashrama* etc. was good—which is certainly not a fact. I only meant that Marx with his own great genius and brilliant originality unfurled the flag of the dialectical doctrine (and not vedanta philosophy) and a scientific world outlook which is found in vedanta also and nothing more. And I stand by it.

Hence I feel that:

(a) The review of Chattopadhyaya is a pitiable exercise in deliberate distortion, misinterpretation, imputing mean motives and baseless charges which amount to making room for a politically-motivated ostracism.

(b) The review has nothing to do with vedanta or the philosophical problem which we have to discuss. Hence I reject its validity or relevance.

(c) For a healthy, free and fair discussion, I would request the party secretariat to lift the ban on my writings imposed for the past few years without even informing me the reasons for it.

(d) I also agree with our chairman who said just now that this conference, being politically-motivated, cannot discuss the book freely in the light of the statement already issued by the party secretariat and the guidelines that are provided in the handout just distributed to the assembled participants here.

(e) I would also request the secretariat to inform me and clarify whether the views of Chattopadhyaya published in the *Party Life* represent the views of the secretariat as they have already issued a statement that my book and Com. Dange's preface do not represent the views of the party.

"THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"—AN OUTRAGEOUS ATTACK ON MARXISM-LENINISM

MOHIT SEN

Bani Deshpande's *The Universe of Vedanta* is not only and not mainly an anti-Marxist-Leninist interpretation of India's philosophical tradition. It is not only a tract that reeks of ignorant chauvinism. It is, first and foremost, an outrageous attack on the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

The book should not be treated as a work that suffers from some "mistakes", some "exaggerations" and some "controversial formulations". It is entirely based on an outlook that is opposed and antagonistic to the very basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. It is for this reason that it cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged.

One is reminded in this connection of a penetrating remark that Bhowani Sen had made in connection with the ideas of the revisionist Garaudy and some of his would-be followers in India. Bhowani Sen had said that previously the attempt was made to prove that Marxism-Leninism was only another religion. Now Garaudy and his followers try to prove that religion is only another version of Marxism-Leninism! If some people had once tried to prove that there were elements of Marxism-Leninism in vedanta, Bani Deshpande takes a qualitative leap and tries to prove that vedanta is Marxism-Leninism and a better Marxism-Leninism than that of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

It is upon this point that I would focus attention in my brief comment.

It is well known that the founders of Marxism-Leninism had categorically stated that the fundamental dividing line in philosophy is that between idealism and materialism,

between those who state that consciousness is prior to matter and vice versa. They had stated that to forget this distinction, to make the slightest concession to idealism, would lead one down the slippery path to religion, to embracing the philosophy of the ruling class.

Bani Deshpande wants to "amend" this basic viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism. He is of the view that this distinction is "western" and cannot be applied to vedanta. Incidentally a consistent theme in the book is the call to reject "western" thinking and ideas. The author seems to forget that Marx, Engels and Lenin are in that sense "westerners" and that in the west there are classes and class struggle and the ideological reflex of these processes. Anticommunists have opposed Marxism-Leninism in our country precisely on the ground that it is "western" and "foreign".

He writes, "I feel it is incorrect and futile to try to understand vedanta philosophy, materialist or idealist, by relating it mechanically to materialism or idealism of the western thinking as developed right from the antiquity of Greeks to Kant and Hegel...

"It is immaterial from the point of view of vedanta philosophy if one is idealist or materialist. So much importance was given by them to the dialectical outlook in life and its laws in their thinking" (pp 19-20).

Having divorced dialectics from materialism the author now seeks to foist the thesis of the superiority of vedanta dialectics upon us.

Later we find the statement: "I say that the ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy *not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached*... history denied the ancient Indian thinkers the opportunity of developing what is now known as the theory of *historical materialism, because it alone is a classical product of time.* Though it can be said that the basis of the law of historical materialism in its

essence was correctly grasped by the ancient vedic philosophers though empirically" (p 30, emphasis added).

Thus the "doctrine of dialectic" was developed by the vedantists to an "amazingly higher level" than that attained even by Marx. And this is because historical materialism alone is a "classical product of time". And even with regard to historical materialism the vedic philosophers had grasped it empirically. Dialectical materialism, evidently, exists outside the realm of time!

While the author states that one must have intuition based on knowledge to make great discoveries, nevertheless he adds "Einstein's great discovery of the deflection of starlight in the gravitational field of the sun, or Marx's *intuition* for the development of historical materialism and surplus value or Lenin's *intuition* in the discovery of the theory of revolution are examples of correct and brilliant intuitions proved by history" (p 47, emphasis added).

Thus the basis of these great discoveries (though to confine Lenin's discovery to the theory of revolution is strange, to say the least!) were not the result of the generalisation of social practice and scientific experiment but the result of intuition. In other words, all these discoveries could have been made much earlier and were made much earlier thanks to the intuition to the vedantists though with some qualifications! What else is this but a return to the utopian socialists who believed that if only they had been born some thousands of years ago they would have saved humanity so much suffering. Marxism-Leninism teaches that Marx and Engels could have developed their doctrine only after a certain development of capitalism and the class struggle of the proletariat. It teaches that Leninism is the comprehensive development of Marxism in the epoch of imperialism, proletarian revolution and the worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism. Historical development, i.e. social practice based on the development of production, science and class struggle, and not intuition is the key. And that is why the creative development of Marxism-Leninism is also only possible on the basis of generalisa-

tion of the totality of revolutionary social practice. Neither intuition nor yoga is of help here.

The author believes that the future already exists and has always been in existence. What has to be done is to exactly foresee and foretell it. We know that Marxism-Leninism gives us the power of prediction, of understanding basic trends of social development and therefore of acting and struggling to bring the future into being. It never and can never make the claim that the future is pre-ordained, is already in existence and can be known by extrasensory perception.

He writes, "It cannot be denied that intuition is also a phenomenon which enables many people to *exactly foretell and foresee things which are beyond normal sensory capacities of human organism* or *beyond even the most sophisticated instruments.* In other words, science alone will answer whether matter has an inherent property of reacting precisely to the future course of events and phenomena, whether super-light-velocity phenomenon exists in nature or *whether matter can exist out of time!*" (p 48, emphasis added).

The author also succumbs to "temptation" and points out a "remarkable coincidence" (p 149). According to vedic calculations society is to enter the *Treta Yuga* or age of plenty exactly 5000 years after the Mahabharata war. To this has to be added a century of transition between epochs making 5200 years or, according to Bani Deshpande, the end of the twentieth century. This the exact date of the coming of communism was already known to these remarkable men!

How this was possible is explained by Dange: "Did the social and natural surroundings or any special discipline of the body and mind, which, also as biological instruments, have to be *refashioned* for scientific enquiry, play any special role helping the vedavadins to arrive at this astounding cognition of the world process, its laws and philosophy despite the fact that the technological advance that helps the modern philosopher did not exist then? Yes.

"This is the science of yoga as Bani Deshpande has shown... *Intuition* itself as an instrument to superior knowledge, is a condition of matter in its process of thinking, to which the human body can be conditioned" (p 14).

This means that it is not Marxism-Leninism that is required but trained intuition on the basis of yoga. This is not only contrary to the very fundamentals of our doctrine but is totally opposed to all scientific development.

This means that the future already exists and not that which has to be made on the basis of scientifically discovered laws of development. This is yoga and astrology and not Marxism-Leninism.

In his book *Man and the Challenge of Technology,* the Soviet philosopher G. Volkov has given a correct definition of intuition and the role it can play:

"After what has been said, let us now consider the 'mechanism' of the display of intuition. This mechanism likewise can only be understood through an analysis of social practice. In this practice man at first encounters some part of a phenomenon having a general nature, encounters an element included in a system of definite relations. He does not yet know this general nature; he does not as yet understand the action of the entire system—it has not been precisely reflected in conceptions. Nevertheless, on the basis of previous experience man surmises that this not an isolated phenomenon. He does not realise this so much as he senses a need to include it in a more general system, make it a part of some still unknown whole. And a hypothetical image of the whole takes shape in his mind. With his phantasy, man supplements the single, or aggregate of the single, to the general.

"Intuition can be defined as the ability to foresee the whole before all parts of this whole are forthcoming, as the ability to grasp in the imagination the very essence of relations before these relations are investigated. Intuition in science is a distinctive, prelogical form of hypothetical thinking which precedes the genetically theoretical hypothesis and logical thinking.

"Intuition consequently requires the movement of thought from the whole, although still vaguely outlined, to its parts, to getting an understanding of their interrelations within the framework of the entire system, i.e. to a theoretical clarification of the whole, to its transformation from the intuitively perceived to the scientifically comprehended" (pp 193-94).

Thus intuition's mechanism is linked to social practice and cannot supersede or substitute for it. One cannot retire to heights free of pollution, do yoga and intuitively arrive at results and knowledge divorced from social practice. And intuition is a prelogical form of thinking which has to be carried forward to scientific comprehension. It is definitely not a superior form of thought which can do much better than science and theory based on science. It cannot lead to superior knowledge. This scientific definition of intuition is totally opposed to Bani Deshpande's concept of it as extrasensory perception acquired through yoga, which is defended by S. A. Dange.

The author is "amused" (so are we, but for different reasons!) to see in vedanta "not only the foundation of Marxism but the dialectical philosophy of Marx itself, as a brilliant further development of vedanta philosophy" (p 49). So Marx is only a developer of vedanta or a nineteenth-century vedantist! Marx and Engels did not accomplish any leap in philosophical thought, so Bani Deshpande teaches. But Marx, Engels and Lenin teach the opposite and that too in relation not to vedanta but classical German philosophy and French materialism.

He again returns to the theme of Marx as a mere expounder of vedanta: "I can say that the *universality of the laws of dialectics was first declared by all the ancient vedic philosophers long before Marx and Engels*" (p 71, emphasis added). And again he states that "this sutra of Patanjali which should be rightly considered the greatest feat of scientific thinking and which runs like a silver thread through the fabric of vedanta philosophy, after thousands of years, once again assumed great significance

when Karl Marx literally repeated it" (pp 71-72, emphasis added).

The superiority of the vedantists over Marx and Engels is asserted again: "By establishing this highly scientific concept of time, vedanta thinkers lead us, as if from the dialectical philosophy of the nineteenth century of Marx into the twentieth century of science led by Einstein" (p 95). So Marx was lagging behind the vedantists since he died long before Einstein worked out his concepts of space-time but not the vedantists since they had discovered both dialectics and relativity!

That Marx was a witting or unwitting plagiarist of vedanta thought is asserted! "They proved that the world existed in the unity of the opposites, in its dialectical synthesis and everything in the universe was in ceaseless motion and change. *The laws that governed this change were discovered by them which only Karl Marx gave to the world in the last century*" (p 143, emphasis added).

The author further states: "This analysis and theory of knowledge is one of the greatest and most revolutionary theory of Marxist philosophy *established for the first time after the vedanta thinkers by Karl Marx and Engels in the last century*" (p 145).

So Marx and Engels only did centuries later what had already been done "for the first time" by the vedanta thinkers who were clearly the real founders of Marxism!

And the real historical merit of Marx and Engels, according to Bani Deshpande, is that they propagated vedanta! He asserts, "Thus while the vedanta philosophy lay deeply submerged in the ignorance of the Indians, *Karl Marx* with his own great genius and brilliant originality *once again unfurled the flag of vedanta over the world, establishing its philosophy and theories, its dialectical laws and scientific laws and scientific outlook*" (p 152, emphasis added).

So Marx was great because he became the flagbearer of vedanta and not because he made some "small" discoveries of his own!

Incidentally Bani Deshpande has the great misfortune of writing after Lenin had died. Otherwise he could have removed the latter's ignorance, since in his "Three Sources and Component Parts of Marxism", as well as in his "Life and Teachings of Karl Marx", Lenin has not a word about vedanta as the real basis of Marxism. Like the Indians, Lenin also was "submerged in ignorance"!

So as to make sure that we have not missed the point the author writes: "I have also no hesitation to say that but for that, Kapil's discovery of the greatest of all sciences of the world, viz his discovery of the dialectical philosophy and its scientific world outlook, *perhaps* may never have been known to Marx and the world today could have been without it" (p 155).

Once again we find Bani Deshpande's subjective idealism manifesting itself, quite apart from colossal ignorance regarding the sources of Marxism. But for the lucky accident of Kapila we may even today perhaps have been without Marxism-Leninism. And yet historical materialism teaches that the development of productive forces and of production relations based upon them give rise inevitably to class struggle which in turn gives rise to ideological systems of different classes. Marx, Engels and Lenin were the geniuses who gave humanity scientific socialism but the latter was, at the same time, the inevitable product of historical development. It had to arise and it did arise and it will go on ceaselessly developing!

Naturally, after all this placing of vedanta above Marxism-Leninism, Bani Deshpande ends with a characteristically clumsy call that the need of the hour in India is to propagate that superior philosophy, viz vedanta.

He wants all Indians, irrespective of "small" distinctions like class, to unite and lead the world on the basis of vedanta. A world mission has been given to us by Bani Deshpande! The role of world leadership too. All Indians uniting together can now act as world hegemons since vedanta is ours. The Soviet Union, the world working-class and communist movement can all be thrust aside.

He writes: "All the Indians of different shades of opinion (should) once again try to understand the rich heritage of their culture and civilisation and *unite* to lead the world, for disunity alone has been their bane for the past few thousand years" (p 155, emphasis in original).

It is against this background that one has to understand the "call" that our author gives:

"And in the words of Marx, I would again say that once the lightning of a correct thought has squarely struck the ingenuous soil of the Indian people, the emancipation of *Indians* into *men* will be accomplished" (pp 159-60).

We have therefore not some stray errors but a consistent thought running all through the 160 pages of the book—that vedanta had anticipated Marx, Engels and Lenin and that too in a superior form. It is in this that the "originality" and "daring" of the author consists. And it is this that puts the book in the category of those which seek to deny and repudiate the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism.

A HISTORICAL DISTORTION IN "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

M. Farooqi

Bani Deshpande has made a shocking statement in his preface to *The Universe of Vedanta*. He says:

"These invasions beginning from the Greeks, and followed by the Scythians, the Huns, the Mughals and Christians until the middle of the twentieth century, continued the process of devastation and ruin..." (p 32).

I am not going into the historical 'merit' of this statement which in my opinion will not stand the test of historical truth. I am concerned with its political implications for our situation.

Firstly, the author uses the expression "Christians" and avoids the use of "British imperialists"!

Secondly, he places the Mughals (i.e. the Muslims) in the category of those who continued to "process of devastation and ruin" of the ancient Indian (i.e. the vedic civilisation).

This can only have the effect of inciting anti-Muslim and anti-Christian sentiment. That a Communist Party member should repeat the kind of charge in which the Hindu chauvinists and above all the RSS and Golwalkar have been adept is absolutely revolting. Can Bani Deshpande attract the Muslims and Christians to the Communist Party with this kind of outlook on Indian history? Politically this will damage the position of the Communist Party among the minorities whose interests it has always championed.

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF VEDANTA

S. G. Sardesai

Right at the outset, in the preface to *The Universe of Vedanta* the author declares that "the basic authority of the shruti and smriti texts is recognised however contradictory they may be and even for contradictory purposes" (p 21).

So dialectical and historical materialism are far off. Here the rudimentary elements of a rational and scientific outlook are blatantly repudiated. Is any discussion possible or necessary on such a basis? Does one argue with persons who claim that the Bible or the Quran are the last word in human knowledge and wisdom, and that too "however contradictory they may be and even (when used) for contradictory purposes"?

With all the tested validity of Marxism-Leninism do we ever say to non-Marxists that "the basic authority" of the writings of Marx and Lenin has to be accepted to understand that Marxism-Leninism is true? Has anyone made such a claim for Euclid or Newton? Is such a thing even conceivable?

It is not an accusation against Bani Deshpande that he brings grist to the mill of Hindu superstition and chauvinism. The fundamental position of his book is identical with the avowed and centuries-old position of Hindu orthodoxy and presentday Hindu chauvinists like Golwalkar and Madhok.

How S. A. Dange could laud such an effort as a "daringly original contribution" (p 15) passes one's comprehension though that cannot make Dange's judgement in any way excusable.

Such positions can only be categorically repudiated, they cannot be argued with.

It is not as if Deshpande has expressed this view casually or inadvertently. Later in his book he leaves us in no doubt that he is a firm believer in the "principle" of vedapramanya, viz that the ultimate criterion of truth is the word of the vedas. This position comes out in a number of places in different ways.

For instance, we are told that "Vedanta philosophy... had reached the apex of human thinking more than three or four thousand years ago" (p 154), and again that "for a scientific understanding no further thinking was humanly possible" (p 155).

With such a view it is perfectly natural for the author to state that "Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached" (p 30). Or further, that "it is immaterial from the point of view of vedanta philosophy if one is an idealist or materialist" (p 20).

Very correctly, for when any and all contradictions in the shrutis are declared as illusory (arising from the dull-headedness of the nonbeliever) how can the contradiction between materialism and idealism be material? That idealists and materialists all over the world have fought each other tooth and nail for centuries, that this conflict has, not unoften, led to bloodshed; is of no consequence.

There is an old anecdote (and in Sanskrit, to boot) that a vedantic rishi was explaining to his pupil that the material world was all maya. Meanwhile a mad elephant rushed on the scene and the rishi took to his heels. On being asked by the bewildered pupil as to why he ran away if the elephant was only maya, the sage replied that the elephant was maya and his running away was also maya! The contradiction was resolved! Such, admittedly, is Deshpande's logic.

Authoritative writers on the subject have elaborately and painstakingly brought out the superficialities and howlers in the book. My knowledge of Sanskrit and the old scriptures is quite limited. For both reasons I will not attempt to cover the same ground.

I take this occasion to raise a very relevant and important question to which Deshpande does not even refer. And that too I am doing to put forward certain broad ideas to which only experts on the subject can do proper justice.

Vedanta, which is both philosophy and theology, has been the dominant philosophy of the Hindus (though this term came into vogue much later) for over two thousand years. The ruling ideas of society, as Marx and Engels pointed out, are the ideas of the ruling class. Which social interests were reflected in and ideologically buttressed (and quite consciously too) by vedanta?

This question must be bluntly posed and squarely faced if the ponderous mystique of vedanta, of the concepts of the brahma and the atma, as also the hairsplitting jugglery with which the philosophy is defended are to be thoroughly exposed. And exposure based on logic alone is not sufficient.

The smritis were composed a few centuries after the development of vedanta as a comprehensive philosophical discipline and the formation of the social organisation of chaturvarnya. The smritikars, Yajnavalkya, Manu and others, make no bones about the matter. Nor does Shankaracharya, who followed a few centuries later. For them, vedanta (more specifically, the unquestioned acceptance of the supreme authority of the vedas) was inseparable from chaturvarnya. They championed both and insisted that the acceptance of one demanded the acceptance of the other.

So vedanta was the philosophical-cum-religious binding force of chaturvarnya, and consequently, in the course of time, of its ramification into innumerable castes. I think that this interrelation, the interrelation between the base and its ideological superstructure, is the key to a sober

objective assessment of vedanta. Or else, there is no decisive break from the realm of mysticism and phantasy which find their extreme expression in what is called "Indian spiritualism", a view fully supported by Deshpande.

Obviously, this relationship was not born, so to say, one fine morning in a cut and dried form. The evolution of vedanta and chaturvarnya are spread over quite a long period of time. Nor was the relationship crude, simplistic or mechanical. As always, there were complex links between the two. Further, as in the case of other social theories of exploiting classes, vedantic theory was increasingly "developed" and wrapped in subtle and obscurantist arguments so much the better to cover up the essential content.

It is recognised that primitive society in India, as elsewhere, was a classless tribal society. There were the Aryan tribes and the non-Aryan tribes (I use the word Aryan in the simple sense of the people whose mother-tongue was vedic Sanskrit and who composed the vedas). The process of conflict and assimilation, material and intellectual, went on among the Aryan tribes themselves, as also between them and the rest. In the earliest times, their understanding of nature and human society was essentially materialistic.

With the development of hunting, cattle-breeding, agriculture, the discovery of metals, invention of tools, etc., came a growing social division of labour, the production of a social surplus product, the separation of intellectual from manual labour. the emergence of class differentiation between the exploiting and ruling classes and the exploited and the oppressed. These broad features of our social evolution are commonly accepted, irrespective of the peculiarities and distinctive features of the social structure as it evolved in India, on which experts have different opinions.

The development of idealist philosophy, as Engels

pointed out, is related to the historical separation of intellectual from manual labour, the separation of abstract speculative theorisation from productive social labour. In the process, the supposedly perfect logical idea is not only separated from matter, not only contraposed to it, but ends up with the total denial of the very reality of matter. And, of course, such a development of idealist thought and logic is basically necessitated by the class need of the exploiting classes to keep the exploited in ideological and material thraldom.

Is this Marxist analysis not applicable to the development of vedanta and chaturvarnya? Surely it is, though all the minute complexities and subtleties of the subject need to be unravelled by Marxists who are experts in the subject.

Broadly speaking, the development of the concepts of the brahma and the atma, the central theme of vedanta, and the development of chaturvarnya go hand in hand. That is my understanding.

The early vedic references to brahma are not at all very abstract. They are quite down to earth. Food is brahma, the elements are brahma. Gradually it becomes, not the material things themselves, but the central spirit behind them and common to all of them. It becomes more and more formless, more and more devoid of any and all properties of matter. It may and does pervade all sensory objects, but still it is qualitatively completely different from them in this, that it is so abstract as to defy, to be beyond any positive definition. Very naturally, for anything that is or can be positively defined must necessarily have form, weight, colour, temperature, motion or some sense-cognisable property. Thus we reach the famous negative descriptions of brahma in the upanishads, such as nirguna, nirakara, avyakta, neti-neti, etc.

And since even thought and reason are a human and hence a material faculty, ipso facto, brahma is beyond cognisance by reason or thought as well. It is achintya, ajneya, etc.

But then, after all, how is one to believe that it exists? This naughty question the materialists in India never ceased to fling in the face of the vedantists. The reply, of course, was that though the supernatural brahma was beyond cognition it could be "reached", "attained", "realised" through intuition, which again was a supernatural faculty of the individual atma, itself an offshoot of brahma, not of the human body or brain. So, as Deshpande would have it, all cussed doubts and contradictions are resolved.

And who built this whole metaphysical edifice? Clearly the brahmins and the kshatriyas, both of them the non-productive classes and, between themselves, the sharers of temporal and spiritual-religious power. Exceptions were there, particularly in the earlier formative period of chaturvarnya, when a certain amount of social fluidity still existed, and people from the lower rungs of the social ladder could, by various means, rise higher and get accepted into the ranks of the ruling classes.

It cannot be denied that the chaturvarnya form of social organisation was far more productive than the earlier primitive, communal social structure. The varnas were not tribes. Their formation implied the gradual emergence of new crafts, of agriculture, of a previously unknown social stratification which undermined (however partially and unevenly) the simplicity, unity and equality of primitive tribal society. Just the same, the new social formation developed the productive forces of society. This was so not only in respect of the volume but also of the variety of articles produced. The geographical area of a uniformly organised and disciplined society also expanded. Extensive kingdoms began to replace small tribal principalities. Thus the formation of chaturvarnya did play a historically progressive role. And in so far as its ideology helped to guide and organise such a society it served a socially positive function.

I do not think, however, that such a claim can be made for the ideology after Hindu society got fossilised into

numberless, rigidly endogamous castes. The formation of the castes was a fetter, not an impetus to growing production, and vedanta, *duly adapted,* helped to rivet the fetters more firmly. This could be achieved by the brahmin genius for giving a "flexible" interpretation to any theory or concept, in accordance with which the most abstruse brahma was now presented as one of the gods of the Hindu trinity, viz Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh—a trinity which just does not exist in the vedas. The tormentingly abstract brahma was too intangible for the caste system for which idol-worship was better suited.

However, to continue the narration. The Geeta, chronologically not far removed from the smritis, is brazenly frank in linking up adhyatmavada (another name for vedanta) with the social obligations and responsibilities of the four varnas. The brahmins are the custodians (in fact, monopolists) of knowledge and spiritual power, the kshatriyas wield political power, the vaishyas carry on cattle-breeding and agriculture, the shudras serve all the varnas above them.

The link comes here that the attainment of moksha, the ultimate merging of the individual soul with the cosmic brahma, can only be achieved by members of each varna strictly adhering to their specific duties as laid down by varnashrama dharma. The brahmins were not to touch the plough or any instrument of labour, the kshatriyas were to acquire wealth by conquest, the shudras were fenced off from the vedas and political power. The slightest deviation meant perdition. The insistence of the Geeta and the smritis on this point is absolute and inescapable.

And so that the shudras may not be tempted to stray from their ironclad course of life, even their worship and prayer had to follow the path of bhakti, not jnana, which would give them access to the vedas. The smritis, of course, went further and prescribed corporal punishment for shudras going anywhere near the vedas. So the path of salvation, again, was different for the shudra atma and the brahmin atma!

Centuries later, Shankaracharya tightened the straitjacket still further and in the sphere of philosophy carried the concept of brahma to its logical absurdity, reducing it to utter nothingness. The supporters of vedanta will never accept it, but I think that the charge of being a shoonyavadin and a prachchanna Bouddha (in the sphere of metaphysics) levelled against Shankaracharya is correct.

It is extremely significant that Indian materialists, and above all, the most militant and uncompromising among them generally referred to as charvakavadins, attacked not only the metaphysics of vedanta but also its social role. They poured scorn and ridicule on the caste domination of the brahmins and mercilessly exposed vedanta as the spiritual instrument of caste domination.

The epigrams of the charvakavadins, amazingly sharp and clear, covered an extremely wide range. As we would say, they attacked the vedantists shot and shell on all fronts. I will give just a few illustrations as more is not possible in a short article.

Bhūtātmakam jagat—The universe is composed of the elements.

Bhūtēbhyah chaitanyam—Consciousness comes from the elements.

Swabhāvam jagatah kāraṇam āhuh—The cause of the world (its processes) lies in the nature of things.

Pratyaksham ēva pramāṇam na kashchit āgamah—The criterion (of reality) lies in sense-perceived (evidence) alone not in any veda.

Na paramēshwarah api kashchit—There is no god.

Na punarjanmah na mokshah—There is no rebirth and no moksha.

Maraṇam eva mokshah—Death itself is moksha (i.e. the end of life).

Āgamah dhūrtapraṇitah—The veda is a propagation of crafty people.

Swātantryam mokshah pāratantryam bandhah—Freedom is moksha, dependence is bondage.

Trayo vēdasya kartāro bhanda-dhūrta-nishācharah—The creators of the three vedas are buffoons, crafty people and devils.

There is yet another versified epigram (subhashita) which declares that cattle-breeding, agriculture and trade are honourable professions while those who smear their bodies with ashes and perform sacrificial rites are brainless people lacking any competence to do any useful work.

Then we have, *bahūṇām prāṇinām anugrahārtham chārvakamatam āshrayaṇiyam iti ramaṇiyam*—For the welfare of the common people the philosophy of Charvaka should be adopted. It is beautiful.

So those who were oppressed and suffered under the Hindu social system were clear in their minds regarding the relation between vedanta and social oppression and injustice. No amount of mysticism and quibbling could make them accept the authority of the vedas. It is to their credit that they powerfully exposed the untenability of vedantic idealism from the standpoint of rational materialism, and that too from very advanced positions for their age.

Deshpande makes out that the materialists (who, significantly, were also denounced as veda-virodhi) were not persecuted in India. Well, they were not burnt at the stake, but there is no dearth of evidence that they were severely ostracised which, in a brahmin-dominated society, meant immense hardship and suffering. It was surely not cricket between the vedavadins and the veda-virodhis.

It is not surprising that having deified vedanta Bani Deshpande runs down all materialist schools which attacked the vedas, in the typical fashion of Hindu chauvinists. This, in fact, is one of the running threads of his "treatise" as he himself characterises his book.

Repeatedly and sweepingly he denounces "western" philosophers as incapable of understanding the sublime truth embodied in the vedas. He runs down Brihaspati who, according to Indian mythology, was the original ex-

pounder of materialist philosophy in India. Buddhism, according to him, had "no roots in the Indian soil" and hence suffered defeat. Such stuff is spread all over the book.

Deshpande does not even ask himself the question as to why his championship of vedanta leads him to glorify reactionary thought and social forces in our history and pit himself precisely against the forces which were progressive and radical both in the sphere of social development and philosophy.

I should like to end on a point I have made earlier. I am interested in this subject as any communist should be. In the preindependence period, there was hardly a freedom fighter coming from the intelligentsia who did not dive into it. But original literature on the question is too vast for any one to study exhaustively except those who devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to it. All the same, broadly the viewpoint presented here should not be wrong.

It may also be stated that for scientific writers on the subject English spellings of Sanskrit words and diacritical marks have now become a technical subject by itself. Not being conversant with it I have attempted spellings approximately as near the original Sanskrit pronunciation as possible.

A MISCHIEVOUS BOOK

HIREN MUKERJEE

It has been a distressful experience to listen to Deshpande's defence of his thesis—and more so, to listen to the chairman's justification of his introduction to the former's book on vedanta and Marxism. It is a book which suffers not only from grossly inadequate study of a stupendous subject but is also fraught with serious mischief to our movement.

I was not surprised when the other day Karan Singh, minister of health, commended this book to me. He did not like it when I said that as far as I knew, our party would certainly repudiate such balderdash. I was not surprised either when I heard that the prime minister herself had spoken well of this book. I have no doubt that this slender but high-priced publication will have a large sale. Having written books myself, I should not enviously grudge Deshpande his royalties, and I don't. Karan Singh or the prime minister's approval of a book does not necessarily evoke my disapproval either. But the book, as I said, is mischievous, a slander on Marxism, a caricature of scholarship. It could have been laughed away as a perhaps well-intentioned but infantile fantasy, but the sponsorship (Dange himself introducing it) makes it dangerous. If we could win ready-made support for our cause in India by virtually equating Marxism with vedanta (even calling the former a complement to the latter), perhaps some justification could be pleaded—but it is ridiculous. Support to our movement cannot be purchased that way, and in any case, the proposition (which Deshpande sets out to prove) is preposterous and puerile.

When Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya rightly criticised the weakness of the intellectual apparatus on which Deshpande

relied for his conclusions, the latter's reply was no more than a superior, sneering statement that he could load his book with quotations but chose not to do so. I am sorry to have to say it, but the apparatus of scholarship, in so far as this book is concerned, is dismal. A few, almost stray citations, made out irrespective of time and place, are a pathetic foundation for the most presumptuous conclusions. Except on the hypothesis that we shall gladden the hearts of many Indians, to whom vedanta is the last word in philosophy, by telling them that Marxism derives from it and in any case is entirely reconcilable with it, Deshpande's conclusions can only cause derision. And I am sure no one in our movement, when one comes to think of it, will ever accept that hypothesis, for it is just not true and will not produce the trick.

One could well understand an attempt—which could be very valuable—to refer to things in vedanta and in India's ancient heritage which have a kinship with the broad idea of social justice and the basic objective, even, of socialism. I have myself spoken from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and other forums. I have drawn from the vedas and the upanishads, our magnificent epics, our ancient and opulent literature where the desire for harmony and peace and a nonacquisitive society has found much beautiful expression. To draw, however, the conclusion that ancient India had evolved the concept of socialism would be puerile. Deshpande appears to have been in a sort of trance when he wrote his book; oblivious of time and space, indifferent to the material foundation of social life in antiquity, bewitched by the solemnity and power of some wonderful and, to the Indian mind, genuinely evocative formulations, he has practised, perhaps unbeknown to himself, a peculiar variety of national chauvinism. How else does one explain an astoundingly juxtaposed claim that "Badarayan, Patanjali and Vyasa" had "scientifically" anticipated "Karl Marx, Einstein and Heisenberg"—a jumble that nearly takes the reader's breath away.

One cannot take this book seriously—but the trouble is

that it cannot be just laughed away. Our party chairman, hailing this "original contribution"; and even in today's discussion not dissociating himself from its contents, has placed all of us in an embarrassing quandary.

How Dange, of all people, can have forgotten the age-long historical struggle between idealism and materialism —the former, in its numberless, sometimes even fascinating, interpretations having helped to prop up, even sanctify, the power of ruling groups in class society during several millennia of history? How can he, of all people, ignore the role in India of philosophical idealism which has consoled our masses and numbed, for centuries, all potential for basic social struggle and for transformation by the people's own effort of life on earth instead of being fobbed off with the visionary solace of the life hereafter?

High-falutin' eloquence on the vedanta apart, the quintessential thing about it, in so far as the people's understanding is concerned, may be stated in words attributed to the great Sankaracharya:

Shlokardhena pravadayami yaduktam granthakothibihi,
Brahma satyam jagat mithya jeevo brahmeti naparah.

"I tell you in half a couplet what is stated in ten million books: 'Brahma alone is true, the world is false; the soul and brahma is one'."

Let learned disputants join issue over what Albert Schweitzer, the modern saint, said about 'world-and-life negation', rather than 'world-and-life affirmation', being the predominant aspect of Indian thought. There can be hardly any dispute that whatever the vedanta sublimities, it has—in so far as the broadest masses of our people are concerned—helped to plant in their minds a habit of acquiescence in the social order and an apathy towards basic change which in any case is said to be worth very little since life on our planet is inconsequential and only a petty phase in the evolution of one's being towards absorption in the absolute.

Deshpande has not a word to say about Indian materialism, a subject on which Dakshinaranjan Bhattacharyya and our own comrade here, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, have done so much important work in recent decades. Deshpande does not even mention the famous *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* which gives in a summary the views of different schools of Indian philosophy and naturally refers in a shabby and contemptuous way to Indian materialism. This book, important from so many angles, illustrates how class war took place in the sphere of Indian philosophy and vedanta came up to grab its place at the head, so to speak, but not without a big tussle to which *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* is an indirect but powerful witness. There is no time—nor am I ready with the relevant texts—to refer to the grand story of materialism in ancient India—Chattopadhyaya's books are there for any of you to dip into—but in spite of suppression—by force, by ridicule, misreading and worse—Indian materialism has lived on, and Brihaspati, Charvaka and the Lokayatikas, the Jabali episode in Ramayana, and so many other phenomena have not been blotted out from this ancient country's memory. Deshpande and others like him might have tried to write on such themes, but they have turned their hand to composing hectic hymns to vedanta!

Once only, in his discourse, Dange indicated something one could get to grips with. He said that vedanta, while not materialist, had at least the concept of dialectics behind it. Well, dialectics derives from 'dialego', dialogue, something like the Socratic discourse, and things of that kind. It could have been a fruitful effort if one studied how this aspect has developed in India—the idea that one has to repeat 'Nay, nay' (*Neti, neti*), before one can reach affirmative conclusions, the question-and-answer technique for oral teaching (e.g. *Milindapanha*, the questions of Menander, the Greek turned buddhist) and so many other things. But no—that is not Deshpande's quest! Nor does he look for Indian counterparts (to be found in plenty) to 6th century BC Greek philosophers like Thales,

Anaximander and Heraclitus. He does not seem interested in finding the truth about Indian thought, but prefers a sort of pseudoscholarly sensationalism.

If there are people who read Marx and the bible, for instance, not against each other, not apart from each other, but along with each other, and in support of each other, one should not gratuitously quarrel with them. When, therefore, some of our own people come to rejoice in Marxism and vedanta and in their own way reconcile the position, one should not be unduly worried. The case of Deshpande's performance, carrying Dange's 'good chit', is different and dangerous. It denies by clear implication the integral historicism of Marxist thought, the conviction that the understanding of society is to be sought, basically, in the material relations of production. No Marxist worth the name thinks of his ideology as the timeless *weltanschauung* of working people, but one organically related to historical phenomena. Even Dange concedes the difficulty when he refers to his protege's thesis that vedanta "was based on a fully and logically argued system of dialectical materialism, though he (Deshpande) does not go into the historical question as to how this could be achieved and established" (p 3). In spite of Dange's attempt to cover up this default, what clutters Deshpande's pages is an amalgam of ignorance and presumption in dating of ancient texts and in discussion of their meaning. Even Harbilas Sarda, writing years ago on *Hindu Superiority*, would have felt ashamed of the extraordinary chauvinism of this most peculiar piece of writing.

Instead of writing such preposterous stuff, Deshpande's talent could be so much better utilised if he was more modest. He could have strung together magnificent lines from the enormous treasury of Sanskrit right from the vedic period. For myself, I think often of the parallelism between a tremendous passage (at the end of the chapter on the genesis of the industrial capitalism in Vol. I of *Capital*) and a Mahabharata couplet. In the former, Marx quotes Augier saying that when money comes into this world it

has a congenital stain on its cheek, and adds that when capital appears it drips with blood and dirt from every pore. The Mahabharata tells us:

Na chhintwa para-marmani na kritwa karma dushkaram,
Na hatwa matsyaghatiyam prapnoti mahateem shriyam

"Big money cannot be made unless one tears the hearts of others, does what is evil and kills like the fisherman kills his prey."

One must not, however, infer from this that our epics anticipated the secret of primitive accumulation and the exploitative society!

In Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati ashram, the inmates would go round every morning chanting a couplet from *Markandeya Purana*:

Na twaham kamaye rajyam na swargam na punarbhavam,
Kamaye dukhataptanam praninamartinashanam.

"I do not want any kingdom, I do not want heaven, I do not want to be born again, I want only that the woes of all suffering beings are ended."

One should not, however, accuse Gandhiji of socialist belief—even though he could, in March 1922, make a statement in court which, if known to Lenin, would have gladdened his heart, a statement in which he said among other things: "The Government established by law in British India is carried on for the exploitation of the masses... The miserable little comforts of the town dwellers in India represent the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiters, and the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses."

Do we discover socialism in the Mahabharata when we find, for instance:

Patiputravadhatetat paramam dukhamabraveet,
Daridryamiti yat proktam paryayamaranam hi tat.

"What is termed 'poverty' is a greater grief than the loss of one's husband or son, for it is death by degrees."

In *Bhagavat Purana*, perhaps, there is an injunction that one has a right to no more than the food needed to

fill one's own belly—*Yavad bhriyet jatharam*—and that the excess belongs to all. This is in line with the prohibition of usury, in the manner, significantly, of some of the early fathers of the christian church in Europe (like Tertullian). But nobody will call it socialism.

Many might recall Kalidasa's lovely depiction of the Ganga-Yamuna confluence at Prayag in four couplets of *Raghuvamsha*, canto XIII, the last so beautiful that I cannot help quoting it:

Kwachit krishnoragabhushaneva bhasmangaraga tanureeshwarasya,
Pashyanavadyangi vibhati ganga bhinnapravaha
yamunatarangaihi.

Here Ramachandra asks his beautiful Sita to look down from the air-chariot and see how like the ash-smeared body of Siva coiled by a black serpent, the Ganga shimmers along, with the Yamuna waves bifurcating her flow. From Deshpande's reasoning style, one would—as it used to be done some decades back, when Indian inferiority-complex was at its height—claim that ancient Indians knew how to fly aircraft. There is no reason anyhow today for such pathetic inferiority-complex seeking artificial solace.

The late Professor Kosambi—who, of course, is *bete noire* to Deshpande—once pointed out facetiously but without the least frivolity that Sri Krishna himself, guiding Arjuna in the Kurukshetra war, firmly advised and persuaded the Pandavas to adopt, one after another, the most unscrupulous methods to get rid of such doughty and nearly invincible warriors like Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Duryodhana. Do we, therefore, feel entitled to claim that Sri Krishna himself believed that the ends justified the means? Nothing is quite so simple as all that.

Who will not be moved by the upanishadic message:
Datta, damyat, dayaddham.

"Practice restraint; be generous with your gifts; learn the virtue of compassion."

But can we base on it a thesis that these words contain the essence of socialism?

'Let the lion of Vedanta roar'—this, when Vivekananda invoked the thought, was appropriate, and in the context of his time even ennobling. How ironic that echoes of it should come the way it has done in Deshpande's book! What a pity that Dange, who as a top-ranking comrade is such an asset to our movement, permits himself, as it were, to become almost a sort of liability! Let me ask our comrade Dange—whom we all cherish—to rethink and realise the harm this miserable book has done to our movement. At a time when Marxism-Leninism is being subjected to all kinds of subterranean attack, let us in India be on our guard against the seeping in of pernicious trends into our thinking and our action. Let the collective wisdom of the movement pillory and proscribe the publication which Deshpande has so irresponsibly brought out.

ON THE BOOK "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA" BY BANI DESHPANDE

Dilip Bose

The book *The Universe of Vedanta* by Bani Deshpande has been subjected to detailed examination and criticism by eminent Marxist scholars, and many of them are particularly well versed with Indian philosophy also. While I can make no such claim to any special study of Indian philosophy, it will be my endeavour to confine myself mainly to *two* points of criticism.

I

Marxism, as we all know, is based on materialism while its methodology is dialectics, as applied to various branches of human knowledge; its approach to and interpretation of social movement and history is what constitutes historical materialism.

Therefore the dialectics of Marxism is not like a *mantra* to be repeated in and out of context. It is based on practice —practice to theory and back to practice—this is how Marxism applies materialist dialectics in relation not only to human history, but also to natural science. The conditions of work, and the pioneering labours of Marx and Engels were such that though both of them had made deep studies in natural science, they could not devote the time to write much on this aspect. While the major part of Marx's life was spent in writing *Capital*, i.e. in unravelling the movement of capitalist society and presenting the future picture of socialism and communist society, Engels could leave behind his unfinished *Dialectics of Nature* and of course *Anti-Duhring* to indicate the application of the

laws of materialist dialectics to natural science. Lenin took up the work in *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, and it is only now that this work of interpreting natural science in the light of materialist dialectics has been earnestly taken up by eminent scholars and academicians of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

When, therefore, Bani Deshpande writes that "Kapila was not only a genius but the greatest dialectician the world has known", that "it will be seen that Kapila's doctrine of dialectics . . . is in no way different from the dialectical philosophy of Karl Marx of the nineteenth century" (p 65), he seems to discard all sense of history and is out of focus. This is impermissible if Bani Deshpande seeks to interpret Indian philosophy and tradition from the point of view of Marxist methodology. He does the same when he speaks of relativity and Einstein. More of this in due course.

What was the historical background in which Marxism arose? It was on the one hand the bourgeois revolution in England in the 17th century opening the way for rapid and all-round industrial development (called industrial revolution from 1780 though the word 'revolution' is used in a different context), and the later bourgeois-democratic revolution in France in 1789. And these revolutions were no accident but were preceded and followed by the liberation of human thought of the renaissance.

What was the historical background of Einstein and relativity? Even though Aristarchus in 230 BC had first talked of the earth going round the sun (not our Aryabhatta, as Bani Deshpande on page 127 and even the Press Trust of India is talking*) it was Copernicus and Galileo

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* Aryabhatta did talk of the diurnal rotation of the earth, not the annual round the sun. See *A Concise History of Science in India* by Dr D. M. Bose, S. N. Sen and B. V. Subbarayappa, pp 93-94 :

"The rotation of the earth about its axis is given as an explanation for the apparent westward motion of the stationary asterisms through the well-known simile of a man in a moving boat, to whom a fixed object appears to move in the opposite direction. Aryabhatta was the first among the

who held the heliocentric theory, Galileo in 1632 faced incarceration for propagating this, Kepler had also talked of the elliptic motion of the planets round the sun—the synthesis and further development of all these new thoughts took place in Newton at the end of the 17th century. Newton's 'action at a distance' and his laws of motion to Einstein's 'field theory', relativity and time as a fourth dimension is a logical and historical development. To take it to vedanta is again to repudiate all sense of history—totally impermissible in a Marxist dialectician. Ancient Hindu, buddhist and Greek dialectics did make their own respective contributions—renaissance took it further forward—Newton to Einstein is a logical but dialectical development where Einstein appears to contradict Newton though the former starts by acknowledging his debts to the latter—all this is only the beginning. Only now in the last quarter of the twentieth century we see but a glimpse of the immense complexity of matter in motion.

Materialism is matter in motion but not just ordinary mechanical motion, a mere change of place only—it is the unfolding of its whole wealth of motion, chemical, electrical and now nuclear. The three pillars on which Marxist materialism stood at its origin and development in the nineteenth century are: the discovery of the cell, the discovery of the law of conservation of mass and energy and Darwinism or theory of evolution.

We can refer to the two letters of Engels to Marx dated 30 May 1873 regarding matter in motion and the letter dated 14 July 1858 which says:

"The main thing which has revolutionised the whole of physiology and for the first time made comparative

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Indian astronomers to have mentioned the rotation of the earth to explain the apparent daily motions of the fixed stars, although he was in this opposed and even bitterly criticised by later astronomers... The diurnal rotation of the earth was known to the Greeks several centuries earlier, for in the fourth century B.C. Heraclides of Pontus and his contemporary Ecphantus had clearly held this view."

physiology possible is the discovery of the cell... Everything is a cell. The cell is Hegel's 'being-in-itself' and its development undergoes exactly the Hegelian process, resulting finally in the 'idea', i.e. the particular completed organism!" (*Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp 108-9).

Modern science has made giant strides in all these three fundamentals—it has also spread in the macrocosmic and microcosmic worlds and in the field of microbiology. All this new knowledge is interrelated and integrated today to give us a beautiful harmonious conception of reality that we are constantly and dialectically grappling.

The author Bani Deshpande does not indicate any awareness of these new developments, when he deals with Einstein and relativity. His conception of space is not that of Einstein—the curvature of space is based on the gravitational field of the total matter but whether it is closed or open depends on the non-Euclidean geometry of Reimann or Lobachevsky. Is the universe or cosmos therefore finite or infinite? Is light the limiting velocity or are there material bodies, now called trachyons, moving faster than light and therefore unobservable by us optically or through instruments? Is there a finite time in our cosmic past when this universe was created or is it the creation field theory of Hoyle and others—the steady-state universe? As the complexity of matter in motion unfolds, modern science finds further confirmation in materialism. And one would like to submit in this connection that *chaityana* of vedanta is not the energy of our modern science as the author Bani Deshpande would have us believe (pp 137, 138, 139).

Similarly the *paramanu* of ancient Hindu thought or the indivisible atom of Democritus has found richer but varied and even apparently contradictory manifestation in the recent discovery of 200-odd elementary particles.

All these escape the author. For Einstein's theory of relativity he takes Lincoln Barnett's excellent but small elementary populariser book *The Universe and Dr Einstein*.

And the quotation he uses from Barnett (p 103) betrays the idealistic subjective interpretation of Einsteinian conception of space and time, and this is precisely where one can be wrong. Time as a fourth dimension is an objective fact, now fully verified from the age of cosmic particles reaching the upper atmosphere, as we could compute from our sputniks. There are other tests also of time dilatation and contraction. Einstein is therefore no longer true only in the realm of theory but proved experimentally after man launched into space. The author, however, in all innocence says:

"In my opinion the definition of *digdesh-kal-bhedashunyam-brahma* is more correct, appropriate and meaningful than even the definition of space-time-continuum as given by Einstein because the vedic definition carries more clearer (sic !) the scientific concept of physical reality, as a continuity of matter in perpetual motion and development than the Einstein's concept of continuum. In Einstein's definition, *the subjective and unscientific concept of space and time* does not dissolve into establishing the truth of physical reality unless one is to some extent acquainted with the theory" (p 111, emphasis added).

II

The author Bani Deshpande mentions on page 17 of the book and elsewhere that correct intuition enabled Einstein to his "great discovery of the deflection of starlight in the gravitational field of the sun", Marx to his "development of the theory of historical materialism and surplus value", Lenin to his "discovery of the theory of revolution"—all these "are examples of correct and brilliant intuition proved by history". He does mention in the very next sentence: "But if Einstein had not studied physics, Marx had not read Hegel's dialectics or Lenin had not understood the philosophy of Marx, then any amount of intuition in the world would have been meaningless."

This intuition though based on knowledge, as the author

concedes, is to him, however, "not just a means to superior knowledge as modern science is trying to believe. Such knowledge arises in the earlier stages of intuition. But in the *higher stages many faculties develop in the sensory organs and our body which are lying dormant and normally unknown to human experience which Patanjali has explained* and science will have to investigate" (p 48. emphasis added).

So it is yoga which gives this superior knowledge almost transcending time and history. Bani Deshpande makes this point elsewhere when he poses the question: "What must have prompted the ancient Indian philosophers thousands of years ago to conclude that the universe is a space-time-continuum." He provides the answer a few lines later:

"In the persuit (sic!) of knowledge the Indian philosophers, it appears, had left nothing unsaid as far as possible for the human intelligence, without the aid of modern science. They had perfected the science of dialectics and had developed it to a higher stage in their science of yoga which many modern thinkers do not know. Its (sic!) a great irony of fate that based on the philosophy of dialectics and mainly by intuition, what the Indian thinkers could accomplish in the ancient days has been accomplished by the modern thinkers with the aid of science but yet without a dialectical philosophy and its scientific world outlook" (pp 119-20).

S. A. Dange seems to endorse this point of view in his 'Foreword' when he says towards the end:

"Did the social and natural surroundings, or any special discipline of the body and mind, which, also as biological instruments, have to be *refashioned* for scientific enquiry, play any special role helping the vedavadins to arrive at this astounding cognition of the world process, its laws and philosophy despite the fact that the technological advance that helps the modern philosopher today did not exist then? Yes.

"This is the science of yoga as Bani Deshpande has

shown in many of his articles published so far (referred to by Dr G. Adhikari in *Party Life* of 22 April—DB) and one of whose best exponents was Patanjali. It is now receiving attention from modern scientists and philosophers. *Intuition* itself as an instrument to superior knowledge, is a condition of matter in its process of thinking, to which the human body can be conditioned" (p 14, emphasis in the original).

If intuition could explain an Einstein, or even Marx or Lenin, as the author Bani Deshpande would have us believe, we then fall back on Arthur Koestler's *Sleep-Walkers*—a pleasant reading but totally unacceptable to any Marxist as history of science.

What was Einstein's intuition? Let us see how the Soviet authors look at it. The Soviet writer Kuznetsov in his biography of Einstein points out that Einstein's intuition was his conception of the relationship between mathematics and reality. He says:

"Logical constructions which can be expressed in words or mathematical symbols represent a secondary satge. At first there appear images of physical entities of a visual or motor nature which combine and associate among themselves" (p 95).

Therefore, ultimately Einstein's experimental intuition became mathematical intuition. "As Einstein says, the advance of science represents a flight from both 'wonder' and 'selfevidence'. Science strips geometrical construction of 'selfevidence' when experiments find fault in the observations which had given those constructions an apparently sound physical meaning. This is the flight from 'selfevidence'. But then science correlates new observations to pure logical constructions. The former cease to arouse wonder, the latter acquire physical meaning which could not have gained by pure thinking alone" (Ibid, p 99).

Nikolai Semyonov, member of the presidium, USSR Academy of Sciences, in his article on "Marxist Dialectics and Scientific Discovery" in the book *The Scientific and*

Technological Revolution (published by Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972) says:

"Theory usually develops in such a manner that a new experiment (or more precisely, the old one, now interpreted) causes, or, rather, brings out and reveals the contradictory situation inherent in the existing system of concepts. This necessitates creative thinking of a kind that formal logic no longer provides, namely, dialectical thinking" (p 35).

Further:

"If we assume that scientific thinking is 'logical' and 'rational' only insofar as it proceeds in strict accord with the axioms, postulates and theorems of formal mathematical logic, the scientific thinking that actually takes place inevitably seems to be irrational, so that science itself appears to be a madhouse where only superficial order is maintained by the logician-attendants but by no means by the inmates, whose sole aim is to disrupt it.

"If this were so, the whole theory of scientific knowledge would prove to be a purely outward and absolutely inexplicable fusion of two different and irreconcilable sciences —formal mathematical logic and the purely psychological description of intuition" (p 50).

Semyonov sums up this relation between intuition and reasoning thus:

"The initial contradiction which destroys the old theory is thereby resolved ('removed') within the new, more profound and specific theoretical understanding which includes the old theory as a particular limiting case. *Intuition, thus understood, emerges as nothing else but the form in which a perfectly rational process* or *reasoning takes* effect" (Ibid, p 52, emphasis added).

Therefore, in my opinion, if we were to accept the theory of 'intuition' developed further to yoga as held by Bani Deshpande, I am afraid it will mean giving up virtually the *weltanschauung* (world-outlook) and philosophy which seeks not only to interpret the world but to change it.

ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

K. D. Sikdar

In all countries philosophical tradition is the subject of acute ideological struggle, especially so in the oriental countries.

The strongest point in Indian philosophy is its uninterrupted development for about 2500 years.

This tradition is still living and in this country even illiterate masses are influenced by philosophical ideas. Religious, political and other institutions including neocolonialists and right-reactionaries are quite active in this field.

Though our Marxist scholars have been active in this field for some time it is not yet up to the mark. Especially vedanta philosophy which is dominating over all other philosophy is a very important system of philosophy of India and at present ideologists of US imperialism have published thousands of books, particularly on vedanta and yoga.

Dange, who has always been an initiator and inspirer to Marxist scholars in this country, had drawn our attention in his inaugural address to the first party school towards this.

Bani Deshpande has written the book *The Universe of Vedanta* in reply to one Dutta Bal who, it is said, was distorting the essence of vedanta philosophy which according to Deshpande is a scientific philosophy. Before Marx this philosophy had discovered dialectical materialism.

Philosophical heritage is a very important weapon in the hands of the working class in its fight against the class

enemy, provided that these traditions are carefully studied, analysed and selected to find out progressive traditions from the point of view of social development and class struggle.

If this is not done, only revolutionary motivation or romantic assertion will not lead to our desired goal, on the contrary it will turn into its opposite and supply a weapon to the class enemy.

Every communist takes pride in the progressive tradition of his country and certainly we should be proud of our contribution to world culture but any absolutisation may lead to chauvinism and nationalism.

The claim that the essence of dialectical materialism or Marxism was discovered before Marx and Engels in a particular country is not new. That all the propositions and discoveries of modern science were known to the ancient people of a particular country is also not new.

These claims were made by orthodox pandits of many countries from the point of view of feudal ideology and each and every superstition was declared to be scientific.

Again the ideologists of national and petty bourgeoisie also claimed the same but in a rational way.

Now the neocolonialists are playing the same record, Chinese Marxists had discovered that dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels had its source in Chinese philosophy. Professor Chu Chien-chi and Kuo Mo-jo held this view. Professor Chu said that the concept of *yin, yang, tao* and *tai chi* in Chinese philosophy explains the essence of dialectical materialism (see M. Altaisky & V. Georgiev, *The Philosophical Views of Mao Tse-tung,* Moscow, 1971, pp 38-39).

Again, Kuo Mo-jo in his book published in 1957 with the title *Laughter in the Underground* wrote a story in allegorical form in which Confucius was a sage of antiquity and Marx a whiskered crab speaking pidgin language discussed for a long time and ultimately it was found that Marx had said or written nothing new. Everything has

been explained before him by Confucius (*Theoretical Conceptions of Mao,* Moscow, 1972).

The result of such research work is clear to everybody now. The nationalism and chauvinism that are derailing Chinese revolution is the result of sinification of Marxism which had its root in the traditional sinocentrism.

Now let us look at the substance of the book under discussion. He has said the following:

(1) Dialectical materialism was discovered by vedanta philosophy of India long before Marx.

(2) Not only dialectical materialism but also almost all the major discoveries of modern science were known to the vedanta philosophy including time, space, matter, motion, electricity, electrotherapy, energy, astronomy, etc.

(3) This discovery became possible not on the basis of the tremendous development of productive forces but through intuition based on yoga.

(4) This golden age of philosophy came to an end because of a series of attacks by foreign invaders.

To prove all these he used the following methods:

(1) Total rejection of western scholars, and modern methods which include bourgeois and Marxist methods.

(2) His sole method is quoting a few sentences, half sentences out of context and force a new meaning without negating the traditional meaning with proper facts and logic.

Now let me explain why I feel so.

Firstly, his injunction against western scholars and western-oriented scholars is meaningless. It is not a fact that all western scholars were stooges of imperialism and all of them underestimated India. Even the ideologists of imperialism differed. There were democratic- and socialist-oriented scholars also. Marx and Engels used their materials. Even Bani Deshpande has quoted Vincent Smith who is known to be a very faithful ideologist of British imperialism. Bourgeois development replaced the traditional method of research of the middle ages. Moreover they dis-

covered many facts which Marxist scholars can use critically.

Secondly, the author has revised Marxism by brushing aside the basic question of philosophy—what is primary in the relation of consciousness and being and social consciousness and social being? He has said that this is mechanical and a product of European philosophy which from the beginning was divided in two schools but in vedanta philosophy this is not applicable but he does not stick to his point. Immediately afterwards he mentions materialist philosophers of vedanta philosophy. So, if there were materialists who were idealists, what was their philosophy? No answer is found to this question. If there were no idealist philosophers he should have said so. If vedanta philosophy was originally materialist but was later on distorted he could have proved it in that way. He simply quotes all the major authors Vyasa, Patanjali and Samkara to prove his thesis. This confusion begins from the basic premise of the author. He neglected historicism in his research. He has not gone to the question of origin of the vedanta philosophy, its later development and its most developed form. I take it that the contradiction in any initial concept is not easily detectable because contradiction is latent in it but later on distinction appears and opposites are discernible. The upanishadic period is full of this contradiction and later on one view dominates all others and in this way the Badarayana-compilation appeared. These developments reflect the development of the society. Here the question of the law of basis and superstructure comes in. Engels said, "the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical and other ideas of a given historical period" (*Anti-Duhring*, p 37).

Superstructure expresses the contradiction of the basis and the internal contradiction both in the basis and super-

structure also arises because of the vestiges of old structure and ideas. The author did not try to find out the basis behind the idea because he cannot prove there the intuition and yoga which alone led the ancient philosophers to the discovery of dialectical materialism. It is not from the social being that social consciousness is derived but by increasing mental faculty of intuition through yoga that man is able to raise himself to the state of omniscience. This is rejection of materialist theory and theory of knowledge.

Next the author has thoroughly neglected the question of class relations. Which class did the philosophy serve and against whom? The author finds in vedanta humanism, love for all. In India he finds coexistence of philosophers of all shades and trends and a brotherly discussion. He neglects Samkara's quoting law-givers' injunction to the effect that molten lead should be poured in the ears of sudras who would listen to the veda-chanting. He forgets Al Beruni's evidence that the astronomer had to add Rahu's eating of sun along with his brilliant discovery of the cause of eclipse for fear of the law-givers. The author has forgotten Manu's injunction against the logicians. He has failed to explain the significance of adoring Iswar with Niriswar, Samkhya or surrender of Uddalaka Aruni after fighting a courageous battle defending his protomaterialistic view against the rising idealism of ruling class. All this happened because the ruling class backed the idealist philosopher against materialist philosopher.

The author time and again repeats the formula that the ancient Indian vedanta philosophers discovered the laws of dialectics, negation of negation and indivisibility of cause and effect but he himself neglects all the categories and laws in his investigation. What he means by indivisibility of cause and effect I do not understand. The infinite nature has no cause but every isolate has causes from one frame of reference. After the effect is produced it will react upon its causes. Does it mean indivisibility of cause and effect? If they are not divisible,

how are the scientists deriving laws and how are they producing things?

According to the law of negation of negation everything develops from simple to complex, lower to higher and every higher stage retains some properties and characteristics of the preceding stage which turns into a negative force in relation to the past and becomes positive in the main in relation to the future. In an individual case this forward development may be disrupted but as a whole progressive development continues. In the case of society this is also true. This motion is born out of internal contradiction. External contradiction retards or enhances the process acting through the internal process. Hence the growth, development and decay of Indian society should have been examined from this point of view. What internal and external motion caused the socalled golden age of philosophy and science and if it decayed what was the cause? Historical evidence does not show a straight line of development or decay of Indian society. There were many golden and dark ages but there was no socalled phantastic development and the claim that it even surpassed the modern is the negation of the law of negation of negation.

Of course Indian history is full of many brilliant conjectures but that is not exclusive to India only. The Chinese, the Babylonians, the Sumerians, the Egyptians and the Greeks also made their contribution. As I have shown earlier, Chinese philosophy had brilliant naive dialectics and Engels told about buddhist dialectics but they were simpler, naive materialism and dialectics in comparison to modern theories. Advanced materialism and dialectics could not have arisen in the ancient stage because modern dialectical materialism is the product of not only Greek speculation on the whole but also the analytical method connected with bourgeois mode of production along with the necessity of a class. Without these historical circumstances modern dialectics would be impossible. The confusion between naive, simple dialectics and materialism and modern dialectical materialism is the outcome of the

author's misconception about two qualitative levels. There is atom in man but man is not atom. It is a higher level and to argue against this he had to find out one golden period in early stage and this is negation and revision of Marxism. Now something must be said about intuition. He has quoted from some Soviet authors. I will quote from the latest book published by the department of philosophy of the Academy of Sciences *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy:*

"New ideas that change our former notions arise, as a rule, not through strictly logical deduction from previous knowledge and not as simple generalisation of experimental data, but as a kind of leap in the movement of thought. Such leaps are induced by the very nature of thought, by its immediate connection with practical activity, which impels thought to seek new results beyond the bounds of what can be perceived by the senses and argued on strictly logical lines... But this is not to say that intuition is independent and arises out of nothing. It gets its first push from the previous level of empirical and theoretical knowledge of the object. The abilities and experience of the thinker, his whole way of thought, are rather important in this respect. His intuition may be inflenced by various episodes in his life, and the influence of these chance factors, their speed and suddenness, sometimes look like 'inspiration'...'Newton's apple', 'Mendeleyev's dream', and so on... Intuition furnishes in concentrated form the experience of the previous social and individual intellectual development of mankind. There is nothing mystical about it, its immediacy is relative, and intuitively suggested theoretical propositions are afterwards tested by logical processes as a result of which the original conjecture is either rejected as unfounded or acquires the form of a scietifically based hypothesis" (pp 242-43).

This definition of intuition has nothing to do with the author's idea of intuition which is nothing but Bargson's intuition, an idealist interpretation of the concept.

Mass and energy relation always exists at different

levels. Hence his attempt to connect pure energy, i.e. chaitanya is a pure imagination. Thought has a universal character along with specific and the dialectics of universal and particular and its evolution from lower to higher must be understood. Also it should be noted that it is the product of historical universal human practice and its relativity.

While concluding I am constrained to say that the author has revised Marxism in the name of original research. The wellknown theory of Mao that "east wind prevails over west' or imperialist propaganda that 'east is east and west is west' have been served to us in a new bottle.

Every country has contributed to world culture irrespective of east or west. We must find out these materials, but not in order to supply a weapon to the enemy. Our party has correctly dissociated itself with this book.

DISCUSSION ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

P. R. NAMBIAR

While agreeing with the main criticisms made about the contents of the book, *The Universe of Vedanta,* by comrades assembled here I have to add the following.

What is the aim of the author Bani Deshpande in bringing out this new book? His theme "is a challenge as much to the modern science as to the established theories and understanding in the world of Marxist philosophy and history"—this is what the publishers have to tell us (see the front flap of the cover). Let us see what the author has to say about his attempt:

"I have made a small attempt in understanding its (vedanta philosophy—PR) scientific content by presenting it in the perspective of dialectical materialism—the language of the greatest science of the vedanta philosophers and modern times" (p 160). So he has tried to prove that dialectical materialism is the language of the vedanta philosophers. Really our author has here made an attempt to glorify the vedanta philosophy and raise it to such a height alleging without any foundation whatever that Marx, Engels and Lenin were enamoured by it. Unfortunately our young comrade has taken up a task in which anyone is bound to fail—i.e. the task of glorifying the philosophy of status quo which is at present a weapon in the hands of the most reactionary classes in India.

The central party education department in the note dated 5 May 1975 has correctly pointed out, "The question is, thus, not a general one of whether or not certain elements of dialectics, in an elementary form, were to be found in different Indian philosophical schools, including vedanta." This question has been the subject of investiga-

tion by Marxist-Leninist scholars in the past and obviously needs to be further investigated. But has Bani undertaken such an investigation? If so all of us should give all encouragement. Obviously he was not interested in such an investigation. So what is attempted in *The Universe of Vedanta* is to glorify without any hesitation the vedanta philosophy based mainly on the subjective desires of our author. If he had based himself on the fundamental principles of Marxist investigation he would not have ended up mixing up Marx, Engels and Lenin with the old philosophers of vedanta. What our author really lacked here is a clear grasp of the main point of departure between pre-Marxian philosophers and Marxian philosophers. In his famous theses on Feuerbach Marx has clearly pointed out the fundamental difference between philosophers who interpret the world and the philosophers who change it. But our young author here is confused and without any hesitation whatever he gives the first place to vedantic philosophers of India and then includes Marx and Engels at the bottom in the list.

May I give you some examples from his book?

"The ancient vedanta philosophers like Kapil, Badarayan, Patanjali, Vyasa, Shri Krishna, Panini and Marx and Engels of our time were the most brilliant dialecticians world history can record" (p 153). Look at the panel of eight most brilliant dialecticians of the world! He could not include Lenin among them! No comment is necessary. Again you can find, "It was only the high scientific dialectical outlook which enabled the vedanta philosophers and Marx and Engels to probe the mysteries of this universe, to discover the underlying truth of physical reality and in this pursuit courageously embalmed that supreme spirit itself in the image of man; the most beautiful creation of nature" (p 154). Again our author has callously asserted, "... Marx, Engels and Lenin, who stood head and shoulder above all the modern philosophers also felt so much enamoured by it (vedanta philosophy—PR) as to freely recommend its investigation and research" (p 154).

Why should such a piece of fabrication find a place in this work if it is genuine scientific research work? One has to come to the conclusion that Deshpande in his urge to glorify vedanta philosophy has been blind to the revolutionary omnipotence of Marxian philosophy and the greatness of our teachers, Marx, Engels and Lenin. In one place he has conceded that Marx, Engels and Lenin stand head and shoulders above all the *modern* philosophers only but not above ancient philosophers. Here I must say no Marxist-Leninist can be expected to stoop to such denunciation of one's own revolutionary philosophy and its founders.

Thus it is clear that the aim of the author is to establish by his subjective assertions that vedanta philosophy is superior to Marxism-Leninism. For his failure in this he can only blame himself. He has invited on himself the just condemnation from the entire revolutionary masses of India.

The second point I want to make is that the author was blind to the flowering socialist civilisation built on the basis of Marxist philosophy. He can see that the socalled "higher vedanta philosophy" has only helped to retard the growth of the Indian civilisation. To test a theory in practice is a point any research student should remember. But to our author here, social practice is not at all important. Hence his observation: "The modern civilisation having successfully subdued the forces of nature, has only added more misery and exploitation of man by man which is the negation of the basic tenets of vedic outlook." Does not modern civilisation include socialist civilisation also? Is he not by such unscientific vague condemnation of modern civilisation bringing grist to the mill of the enemies of progress and socialism?

The third point I want to state here is that the author has not relied on the wellknown principles of the Marxist theory of knowledge in trying to analyse the philosophy of vedanta. The tremendous strides taken by human progress since the days of the vedas, the great scientific dis-

coveries and the social, political and economic revolutions that have shaken world to its very foundations have made great contributions to the treasurehouse of human knowledge. Our author has in his book challenged the basis of Marxist philosophy by asserting again and again that "vedanta philosophy...had reached the apex of human thinking more than three to four thousand years ago" (p 154).

The last point I have to make is the author's failure to relate the growth of the vedanta philosophy with the classes and class struggles going on in India during the period. A socalled scientific analysis of the social consciousness of the people without attempting to study their social being is to say the least an unMarxian analysis. One can only advise the author to adopt a Marxian approach whenever he tries to analyse our past heritage. His refusal to abide by certain fundamentals of Marxism has so far led him astray from the Marxist-Leninist path. He has run into conclusions which will in effect help more the dark forces which are using the vedanta philosophy to oppose any progress in India.

METAPHYSICAL IDEALISM TWISTED AND PRESENTED AS DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Y. Balarama Murty

Bani Deshpande's book *The Universe of Vedanta* deals with many subjects, vedanta philosophy, theory of relativity, chronology of puranas, comparative analysis of Greek and Indian systems of thought, yoga, intuition and many others. I won't go into all those things, firstly because it is too vast and varied a subject and secondly because of my own limitations. I am not competent to discuss Einstein's theory of relativity, not to speak of its supposed elaboration in the vedanta philosophy. I also know very little of yoga, intuition and their supposed scientific veracity.

So I shall confine only with the main subject of this book, that vedanta philosopty is really not an idealistic philosophy as is commonly interpreted but is nothing but dialectical materialism as elaborated by Marx and Engels. The only difference being that Marx and Engels based their theory on the latest developments of natural sciences, vedanta philosophers did it by virtue of their intuition acquired through the powers of yoga.

Let me state in the beginning itself that this theory is thoroughly wrong, distorted and goes against all the existing work of Marxist scholars in this field. The consensus of all the Marxist scholars, both Indian and foreign, on this subject is that vedanta philosophy which is commonly understood as the philosophy of Sankara is idealism pure and simple and the complete negation of materialism.

It does not mean that one should follow the consensus, especially in matters of philosophical research. Certainly originality and creative thinking are welcome.

But they should be based on a sound knowledge of (1) dialectical materialism as elaborated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and further developed by Marxist theoreticians, (2) a sound knowledge of Indian systems of thought and lastly (3) the argument should have internal consistency.

I find that Deshpande's work lacks all the three qualities. It is also painful to note that the same defect is to be found in the introduction of our esteemed chairman S. A. Dange.

I shall start from the third point, "internal consistency".

Deshpande repeatedly asserts that the vedanta philosophy is nothing but dialectical materialism as we communists understand. He dismisses Hegel, poohpoohs ancient Greek dialectics, considers buddhist dialectics as of no consequence (which Engels specifically mentions) and places vedanta dialectics, only just below that of Marx and Engels. But in the very same breath after a few pages, he says "that it is premature to say whether this philosophy is idealist or materialist" (p 156). Then why does he assert so vehemently that it is nothing but dialectical materialism. He also says that to divide the various systems of philosophy as idealist or materialist is wrong and does not suit Indian conditions. According to Deshpande what is important is whether all the systems, idealist or materialist, conform to dialectics or not.

This is the *first pitfall* of Deshpande. Lenin in his book *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* categorically states that "matter" does not disappear even after all the latest discoveries of science. He also states that the fundamental distinction in philosophy remains that between materialism and idealism. He also states that the "concept of matter as we already stated epistemologically implies nothing but objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it". Thus we deal with matter not as a scientific category but as a philosophical category. Even with all the advances that science has made and will make in future these categories do not disappear.

When it is so, how much more important is it in ancient days when man's knowledge of nature was very limited.

To raise the problem: which is primary, matter or mind?, itself is a big advance in philosophical thought. This problem was raised in the upanishads, but was mostly answered in favour of idealism.

How can vedanta, which even according to Bani Deshpande, does not categorically answer the question of primacy of matter or mind, be elevated to the plane of dialectical materialism? This simple, yet vital inconsistency in Deshpande's argument is enough for his whole theory to crumble.

What is dialectical materialism? It is based on a definite number of *principles, laws and categories*—let it be noted, one must not be confused with the other.

This has to be stated because it is wrongly argued that any philosopher who talks vaguely of the unity and struggle of opposites, quantitative and qualitative changes and discusses about negation—even in the most elementary and naive form—is a dialectician. Let it be noted that besides these three laws, there are some general and basic principles of dialectics. They are (a) the principle of objectivity, (b) the principle of universal development, (c) principle of universal connection and (d) the principle of concrete historical analysis (*Fundamentals of Dialectical Materialism,* edited by G. Kursanov).

It may be argued that vedanta philosophers in upanishads like Yajnavalkya and even Sankara, not to speak of Gita, talk about opposites, their struggle, law of negation, etc. But do they accept the four principles, especially the first principle of objectivity, i.e. material reality of the world? It is true that some philosophers of upanishads used the word *brahma* meaning the objective universe. Pravahana Jaibali is one such. But certainly not Yajnavalkya who gives a completely idealistic meaning to the word *brahma.* As for Sankara, he not only denies the objectivity of the world, but also denies the principle of change. According to him the universe exists only as an *adhyasa,* i.e. superimposition on the eternal *brahma.* All change is illusory (*vivarta*) or *maya.* Only that which is

changeless, timeless, qualityless, etc., i.e. *nirguna para-brahma,* is the ultimate essence. Even this ultimate essence has no objective validity. It exists only in our consciousness *aham brahmasmi* is the quintessence of subjective idealism.

We talk of Hegel as a dialectician because for him the idea is real, change is real and the change has its own principles and laws. His whole trouble is instead of looking into matter he looks to idea.

As for Sankara, all the basic principles of dialectics are negated by him. If he still talks in some places regarding opposites, negation, etc. they must not be confused with the dialectical opposites. It is facile to label anyone who talks about opposites in any context as a dialectician. Ordinary logic also talks of opposites. Indeed no philosopher worth the salt can avoid talking about opposites, because they are part of reality. That does not elevate him to the rank of a dialectician, not to speak of dialectical materialist.

So the *second pitfall* of Bani Deshpande is that he uses the word dialectical in such a loose sense as to cover every logician.

It is a pity that even Dange in his introduction commits the same mistake. He says that the duality of Sankhya materialism is resolved by the concept of *vivarta* (p 12). The fact is—the concept of *vivarta* killed what little materialism is in Sankhya. Sankhya dualism is infinitely superior to advaita monism. It accepts the objectivity of the world, the *prakriti.* Its weakness is to give *purusha* also an equally eternal place. Advaita vedanta by introducing the concept of *vivarta* or illusion kills the materialist content. It is surprising that Dange upholds exactly the idea which should be actually disowned.

Dange commits a similar but grave mistake of diluting the meaning of the word dialectical materialism. Explaining the *Nasadiya Sukta* he says "The sukta heralds not only the beginning of philosophy but of dialectical materialism" (p 11). He also says, "Indian philosophy has never

left its nasadiya foundation despite the efforts of all brilliant idealists including Sankaracharya and Tilak" (p 11).

Incidentally here he concedes Sankara to be an idealist but why on the next page does he give the word *vivarta*, a word coined by Sankara, an honourable and scientific meaning while actually *vivarta* means illusion?

As for *Nasadiya Sukta,* what does it say? It says nobody knows the origin of the world, even god does not know it. It certainly indicates a high degree of scepticism and agnosticism. It is surely a good trait. But why on earth call it dialectical materialism? Is it pardonable for a great theoretician like Dange to use the word in such a loose sense?

What is the character of motion envisaged in vedanta? As Dange himself says it is the cyclical repetitive motion (p 13). It is possible that this concept of cyclical motion itself is of a later origin. It may even be conceded that some philosophers of upanishads had a different motion, that of eternal growth from the lower to the higher. But to interpret brahma in the aphorism *tat tvam asi* as *matter in motion* simply because the word brahma is used in the neuter gender is fantastic. Even Jehova, the god of Jews, is referred to in neuter gender. It only indicates that the ancient man was thinking of a stage when the distinction of man and woman has not yet arisen. Nevertheless the neuter gender is consciousness not matter. That is the main thing. He is the active creator. *Tat tvam asi* is the best exposition of subjective idealist thought.

The *third pitfall* of Bani Deshpande is that he does not correctly understand the various systems of Indian thought. Rather he understands them exactly in the wrong way.

Certainly there are many atheistic, agnostic and materialistic trends in Indian philosophy. They are sankhya, vaiseshika (atheistic), buddhist, jaina (agnostic) and charvaka schools (materialist). The sankhya and vaiseshika schools later took the theistic garb in yoga and nyaya schools. The buddhists and jainas were agnostics. They were neither materialists nor idealists. But they stoutly

defended the materiality of the world. Charvakas or as some call them lokayatas are materialists of course of the mechanical school.

As for dialectics, meaning not just logic but real laws of growth, it is to be found in vaiseshika and buddhist schools. Both these schools had a conception of (1) eternal growth, (2) the emergence of the new, i.e. qualitative change, and (3) struggle of opposites.

I deliberately leave out sankhya because its theory of satkaryavada denies the emergence of new, and talks of only a manifestation of what is already implicit from eternity. Though the jainas have developed a method of dialectical argument (subjective idealism) they have stretched it to an absurd length in their sapta bhangi nyaya where nothing can be said definite of anything. The charvakas also accept dialectics because according to them consciousness arises out of matter. But there they stop. Either they have not developed their theory further or if they have developed, it is pushed into oblivion due to the social and political oppression to which they have been subjected.

As for mimamsakas, they also accept the materiality of the world. But they attribute magical powers to vedic hymns, rituals and magic. This school is a transplantation of the earliest, prevedic, tribal religion of magic, witchcraft, fertility rites, etc. to the vedic plane. They have nothing of dialectics, because they do not accept growth an as internal law of development.

The one school that denies the materiality of the world, change, growth and engulfs everything with maya or illusion is advaita vedanta of Sankara. It is nothing but metaphysical and subjective idealism. It is farthest from and is the direct negation of dialectical materialism.

It is possible, nay true, that Sankara's advaita is different from the advaita of upanishads. He himself twisted many words to suit his purpose.

The concept of brahma has been changing from time to time.

In the period of Rigveda, brahma meant the mantra. Later the purohit or one who performed the yajna is called brahma. In upanishads, in some places, brahma is equated to universe. As annam is brahma, i.e. food. Later brahma became nirguna and equated to consciousness and bliss, *anando brahma.* It is a very interesting and useful study. But this study is seriously handicapped by the lack of chronological sequence of upanishads.

But however much we may stretch the meaning of the word brahma, we cannot give any materialistic interpretation to the various quotations mentioned by Bani Deshpande. As long as brahma had a material meaning, the concept of advaita could not arise. Because matter and consciousness as per the earliest thinkers of upanishads were two separate things. Dualism was the earliest philosophy. Advaita monism demolished dualism and also materialism by throwing the baby with the bath-water.

To conclude, Bani Deshpande has been looking for tenets of dialectical materialism exactly where he should not. He is closing his eyes to those schools of Indian thought where he can find them.

As for his theory that vedanta philosophers developed the theory of relativity and anticipated Einstein, I would only add one point. Recently a research scholar of Andhra (incidentally he is an excommunist who worked on the philosophical front and is still working) has argued that the sunyavada of Nagarjuna is nothing but the modern theory of relativity of Einstein. Probably many more such theories can be dug up. This is no place to go into the detailed discussion of sunyavada but if nirgunatva according to Deshpande is an attribute of high dialectics, probably sunyavada stands a better chance in the ladder.

As per my opinion both nirgunatva and sunyavada and such other theories are the negation of dialectics. Matter cannot exist without some quality or other. Thus sunyavada is a precursor of later mayavada of Sankara. One more question.

Deshpande starts his work with a problem:

Philosophers like Datta Bal and others are corroding the working class by arguing that Marxism is alien to Indian thought, i.e. vedanta philosophy continues to be the main trend in Indian philosophy. How to counter it? It is certainly not by trying to pour dialectical materialist meanings into vedanta philosophy. That is just the wrong way. The right way is to show that there are many materialistic, agnostic and atheistic schools in Indian philosophy. Advaita philosophy has come to occupy the highest place only after Sankara. Historically speaking after the fullfledged growth of Indian feudalism, i.e. periods of Gupta, Vakataka, Paramara, Chandela, etc. Sankara actually lived at the time of Vakataka kings. All other schools of thought were defeated not simply intellectually but forcibly suppressed. Many an inquisition was held against buddhistic and other nastika trends. The buddhist thought fled to Tibet and survived. Philosophy cannot be studied unrelated to historical materialism. Western philosophers with a deliberate purpose upheld the advaita philosophy to show that Indians are otherworldly and extrovert.

Just as Sankara interpreted advaita to suit his purpose, many modern scholars like Vivekananda, Tilak, Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan have interpreted advaita in different ways. They tried to stress the element of dynamism (karmayoga), this-wordliness sense of equality, universal brotherhood, etc.

This is all for the good because the bourgeois class is trying to refashion itself ideologically and philosophically to suit the modern times, but we Marxists need not and should not put the garb of dialectical materialism over it. This is gross distortion of our theory.

What is the glamour and attraction of the advaita philosophy if it is so unscientific and idealistic?

Here we must pause and raise one or two problems.

All philosophies have a dual role, a social aspect and individual aspect. Man turns to philosophy for consolation and to get inspiration in times of distress. For us Marxists

and for the working class dialectical materialism is not only a world outlook, but also a personal guide to action. It beckons us to participate in the noble task of "transforming the world" not being content with "explaining and interpreting it".

As for bourgeois philosophers, this dual role exists in their outlook and philosophy. This is especially true of the advaita vedanta of India. It gives an entirely unscientific idealist interpretation of the world and jusitfication of social status quo; but what is its message to the individual? Let each individual try for his own salvation. This individualistic appeal is the lasting charm.

Let us take Gita. Its attraction to the modern man is not so much due to its theological discussions, not its upholding of the outdated varna system. In spite of the above ballast, its appeal lies in its urge for action, its philosophical discussions of theory and practice. Do your duty, do not care for the result. This inspired thousands of terrorists to lay down their lives against the British.

The chapters on *Daivasura Sampadvibhaga Yogam, Gunatraya Vibhaga Yogam, Sraddhatreya Vibhaga* yogam, etc. stress the element of satvika man, the modern equivalent of the cultured man who realises the changing times and changes his behaviour accordingly.

One may ask, does the author of Gita or, for the matter, the numerous idealistic philosophers, know that varying interpretations will be put to their words? Yes, they not only know it, they actually wanted it, they are deliberately vague on many issues. This vagueness is a particular trait of all idealistic philosophy, especially of the Indian type. It shows the attempt of the philosophers to project their ideas in as a broad a way as possible, transgressing the sectarian, dogmatic class-roots. That is why Gita and upanishads continue to be the guide to action even now to the majority of Hindus who are otherwise quite modern.

COMMENTS ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

ANIL RAJIMWALE

The book challenges all the basic laws of dialectical and historical materialism, it challenges the very philosophy of Marxism, and all through advocates Hindu chauvinism.

Let us start from the basic question of philosophy. Any philosophy solves the relation of matter and consciousness, points out the primacy of one of the two. Not a single philosophy, not a single world approach, can claim that it is a special variety, Indian or Greek or Chinese or any other. No philosophy can claim that it is not at all necessary to answer the relation of matter and consciousness. Every philosophy is either idealist or materialist—whether it is Indian or western or eastern or any other. Marxist philosophy being materialist shows that matter is primary and ideas secondary. Lenin quotes Engels: "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is the relation of thinking and being...spirit to nature...which is primary, spirit or nature... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and therefore in the last instance assumed world creation in some form or other...comprised the camp of idealism. The others who regarded nature as primary belonged to the various schools of materialism" (SW 1, p 9).

But Bani Deshpande has tried to show that 'Indian' idealism is something different from 'western' idealism. The very definition of idealism is 'western', and therefore wrong, and therefore unacceptable, inapplicable to Indian philosophy. This contention is something un-

heard of in Marxism! Marx, Engels and Lenin have never differentiated between idealism of various geographical units. Idealism is idealism whether Indian or Chinese or western—it will always derive matter from consciousness, shall always give primacy to ideal world, the world of consciousness. But for our author the concept of material world is as real and correct in Indian idealism as in Indian materialism. This is what he says—"In the western schools, belief that the real world exists in the consciousness of man is defined as an idealist philosophy. As far as vedanta philosophy is concerned, it should be made very clear that the real material world *exists as truly as it is true* in both the materialist and idealist thinking" (p 156, emphasis in original). Obviously for him Engels's quotation is totally wrong. The real world existing in the consciousness of man is only *western* idealism. In *Indian* philosophy both idealism and materialism represent the world correctly. Then where is the difference between idealism and materialism? The author erases any differences. He is very fond of quoting from Afanasyev's *Marxist Philosophy*. He should have looked into initial chapters on idealism and materialism. This would have cleared many of his doubts.

The above approach is an abject surrender to idealism in Indian philosophy and leads to nothing but chauvinism —defence of Indian idealism.

This also explains why Bani Deshpande likes so much to call vedanta as *scientific* all through. Which is a *scientific* outlook? Idealist or materialist or dialectical idealist or dialectical materialist? What does a scientific outlook mean? Scientific outlook must be first and foremost based upon objectivity. Conclusions must be drawn from facts and interrelationships of material world. A scientific outlook is the correct reflection of material reality with the help of dialectical method. That means dialectical processes in material world are correctly reflected in such an outlook. Only dialectical materialism can do this and therefore it alone is the most fully developed scientific world outlook. Just dialectics, without the mate-

rial basis (which in that case will be idealist dialectics), is not scientific dialectics. Because it is enunciation of dialectics in ideal world independent of material world and therefore not scientific. Scientific dialectics has to be based on objective facts, has to take the help of scientific experiments.

For the rise of dialectical and historical materialism it is necessary that the level of the development of means of production must have reached a certain stage. For the rise of Marxism, as Bani Deshpande's favourite author Afanasyev points out, three prerequisites, i.e. socioeconomic, natural-scientific and theoretical, were essential.

This was possible only with the transition to capitalist society. It was during the rise of such a society that we came to discover the cell basis of living body, the molecular and atomic components of compounds and elements, the origin and development of living world, the law of conservation and transformation of energy, the basis and history of development of society and of philosophy, and so on. Only as a result of such developments was dialectical and historical materialism born.

Not a single work or quotation from Marx, Engels and Lenin can be cited, which says that vedantists developed dialectical materialism, and that too of a level of (and even higher than) Marxist dialectical materialism. There is not a single reference to dialectics of vedanta in Marxist literature. The quotations from Marx given in the book only ridicule vedanta.

What was the level of social development at the time of vedantists? Even this book has mentioned that at that time communal society was breaking up into class society. Then the means of production must have been of very low level. This is proved by the fact that Indian philosophers time and again give the example of clay pitcher while explaining their philosophy.

How ridiculous is it then to say that even with such a low level of means of production and machinery, electricity was known to the vedantists? "For example, the

ancient Indians knew electricity, though empirically, and we have proofs that *they could also create it.* They also discovered that copper was a good conductor of electricity. They tried to understand the phenomena of sound as the 'electrical explosion' of some elements" (p 130, emphasis added). Where did they get the means and instruments from to know the existence of electricity? With what instruments did they *create* electricity? Where are the formulas expressing electrical relations? If they knew electricity then how does the author say that they did not know electromagnetic forces? How could they stop short at electricity? The author goes to the extent of saying that *mantra-vidya* was nothing but electrotherapy!

Creation of electricity and steam machinery would create a capitalist society, capitalist class and proletariat, proletarian leaders, proletarian party. Should we suppose that all these were in existence during those times?

These attempts to violate the law of social development, the laws of dialectical materialism have led the author to fantastic conclusions. Time and again he tries to show that vedanta dialectics is much ahead of Marxian dialectics.

"... the ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish *but even developed it to an amazingly higher level* which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached" (p 30, emphasis added).

This is an example of how to oppose Marx by appreciating him. Marx has been shown to have fallen behind vedantic developments. On what prerequisites did Marxism arise?

The author by implication clearly says that even without the material prerequisites historical materialism can arise.

Look at this passage: " ... in the development of the means of production and productive forces history denied the ancient Indian thinkers the opportunity of developing what is now known as the theory of historical materialism,

because it alone is a classical product of time. Though it can be said that the basis of the law of historical materialism *in its essence was correctly grasped* by the ancient vedic philosophers..." (pp 30-31, emphasis added).

What does Engels say regarding historical materialism? "The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of means to support human life ... is the basis of all social structure... From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought not in *philosophy* but in the economics of each particular epoch" (Marx-Engels, SW 3, p 133).

As if Engels wrote these words for people like Bani Deshpande, he has warned against finding conception of history not in people's heads, in their philosophy, but in system of *production of means of subsistence*, in *economics*.

Here we are confronted with Bani's wonderful formulation. Though it is admitted that the productive forces were not developed enough for historical materialism to arise yet they grasped the *essence* of historical materialism. How could they reach the essence without studying the phenomenon? And there were no relevant phenomena to understand historical materialism because as admitted by the author the *means of production* had not developed—there were no factories and consequently no proletariat-bourgeoisie contradiction, and there was no possibility of surveying the whole social development in order to bury the bourgeoisie.

Really speaking the author stands only by the second part of his above statement and not by the first part—i.e. the vedantists had already grasped the essence of historical materialism. This is proved by what he writes on intuition, yoga, and so on elsewhere. We will take a number of quotations from the book.

The introduction by Dange to the book says, "Did the

social and natural surroundings or any special discipline of the body and mind, which also as biological instruments have to be *refashioned* to scientific inquiry, play any special role helping the vedavadins to arrive at this astounding cognition of the world process, its laws and philosophy despite the fact that the technological advance that helps the modern philosopher did not exist then? Yes."... "This is the science of yoga—" (p 14). "... intuition based on knowledge alone can create the genius like Marx, Einstein, Lenin or the ancient thinkers of India and Greece" ... "*At the same time it does not mean that intuition does not arise without knowledge*" (p 47, emphasis added). "It cannot be denied that intuition is also a phenomenon which enables many people to exactly foretell and foresee things *which are beyond normal sensory capacities of human organism* or *beyond even the most sophisticated instruments*" (p 48, emphasis added). "All I can say today is that what the idealists call the extrasensory perceptions is nothing but the inherent property of matter to react to future course" (p 48).

Therefore it was as a result of intuition without the help of material conditions that the future course of social development was pointed out.

"According to their calculation the society was to enter the age of plenty and happiness of the *Treta Yuga* exactly 5000 years after the Mahabharat war as per the Yudhishthir calendar. Taking into consideration the period of Mahabharat war such a stage was to be reached exactly at the end of the eighteenth century (AD), i.e. exactly 5000 years after the Mahabharat war. And it can be said with certainty that with the development of the modern means of production a time has come when society has to jump into a stage" where such *yuga* of equality can be established (p 149). Thus we are told that vedantists had even forecast socialism and communism!

Why after all these utterances the author takes the cover of saying that historical materialism was not known to the vedantists? They had such a power of intuition that they

could foresee events thousands of years ahead! There cannot be a more ridiculous statement than this. And of course it is not even remotely connected with anything like Marxism.

Even Marx did not go into such 'foreseeing' about details of future communist society because he said this would be decided by future generation which would be building socialism. So even with such highly developed means of production as that of capitalist society Marx could not have material evidences for communist society in all its details. This only proves that he was a true scientist.

A question, simple one, to our author—where is the mention in vedanta literature that these philosophers knew about slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist society? Did they also know surplus value (!) then? More questions cannot be put just because they look too ridiculous!

But our vedantists did not need any material basis for knowledge; they had the power of intuition. This is another of the highly idealistic understanding in the book. It is not simply idealistic; it is mystical. The author clearly says that for intuition no instruments, and other material elements, bases, are necessary. It is beyond *normal* sense perceptions of human beings. Vedantists were gifted with special powers! This is open violation again of the laws of historical materialism. To strengthen this further the author clearly says in above quotations that knowledge is *not* essential for intuitional powers. He even dares to say that *Marx* and others developed historical materialism out of *intuition!* This is a serious challenge to Marxism. Can he quote a single passage from Marx, Engels and Lenin where they have said so?

Intuition is reaction of things with *future* events! How can things react with things or events that are nonexistent? This is a statement that does not need any comment.

All through the book the author shows a contempt for Hegel. He has at various places called Hegel and his dialectics naive and crude. He even says that no vedanta philosopher would have taken Hegel seriously (Marx, Engels,

Lenin were fools to have taken Hegel seriously!). Here are some quotations from the book: "It would be out of place here to make a comparative study of the doctrine of dialectics, as it has been developing from Aristotle to Hegel with that of the vedanta philosophy..." (p 29); "Hegel reconstructs his dialectic from the crude and naive dialectic of Aristotle..." (pp 29-30); "...as far back as three thousand years ago no vedanta philosopher would have taken Hegelian philosophy seriously or worthy of consideration..." (p 30).

In passing, a very interesting thing has to be noted. The author mentions (p 29) that though Hegel read vedanta philosophy of Shankaracharya, he did not say so, and that even after reading it he built his own dialectic on the basis of crude and naive dialectic of Aristotle! "We shall however discuss in the *Dialectics of Vedanta* how unscientific is the dialectic of Hegel who is called today the greatest dialectician and the founder father of that doctrine in the world by western philosophers and historians" (p 72). For the kind information of the author, Hegel was praised and called greatest dialectician by western philosophers like Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Such an approach to Hegel and his dialectics betrays total ignorance of his philosophy, total igorance of Marx's and Lenin's approach to Hegelian dialectics, and an advocacy of Hindu chauvinism.

Marx, Engels and Lenin have praised and positively evaluated Hegel and his philosophy in so many words and at so many places. They did criticise him, and very sharply at that. But they criticised and negated the *idealistic shell* of his philosophy, *retaining* the most valuable, i.e. his dialectics. Hegel's dialectics and Feuerbach's materialism were the immediate philosophical sources from which dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels was born. It is height of ignorance then to call Hegel's dialectics naive and crude and so on. In that case the author should be frank and say that Marxism-Leninism is also naive, crude, backward, etc.

(And as we shall see later he *does* say so, in a different form, of course.)

What did Marx, Engels and Lenin say about Hegel? "As the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development and the richest in content, Hegelian dialectics was considered by Marx and Engels the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy" (Lenin, SW 1, p 10). "This revolutionary aspect (i.e. dialectics—AR) was adopted and developed by Marx" (ibid, p 11). Here Lenin does not say that dialectics was adopted from vedas, and not from *Hegel.* Further Lenin says that dialectical idea of development, of Marx and Engels, *based upon Hegel's* philosophy is far richer in content than other ideas on revolution (p 11).

Lenin quotes Engels (ibid, p 118): "Without German philosophy ... particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being." Let the author of *The Universe of Vedanta* have a careful look at this. Let him also pay attention to what Engels says about Hegel: "What distinguished Hegel's mode of thought from that of all other philosophers was the tremendous sense of the historical ... the development of his thoughts always proceeded parallel with the development of world history... Hegel ... did not parade ignorance, but was one of the finest intellects of all time. He was the first who attempted to show a development, an inner coherence, in history..." (Marx-Engels, SW 1, p 512). "Marx was, and is, the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the kernel which comprises Hegel's real discoveries in this sphere..." (ibid, p 513).

The following quotation from Marx is more suitable— "....as I was working at the first volume of *Das Kapital* it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre, epigoni to treat Hegel ... as a 'dead dog'. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands *by no means prevents him from being the first to present its*

general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner" (Marx-Engels, SW 2, p 98, emphasis added). Thus according to Marx, Hegel was the first to present the general form of dialectics; according to Bani Deshpande, vedanta was the first (!) to do so, and Hegel was a mere foolish, ignorant fellow following 'crude', 'naive' dialectics of Aristotle (who himself knew nothing!).

Again—"Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism" (Lenin, CW 38, p 362). No vedas are mentioned here even though Lenin was so 'enamoured' of vedas, according to Bani Deshpande!

And then we can find countless examples of high praise for Hegel's dialectics by Lenin, especially in volume 38 of his collected works. Among other things this volume contains a conspectus of Hegel's works by Lenin. Besides criticism it is full of praise for Hegel. It is not necessary to quote all that here.

In none of their works do Marx, Engels and Lenin mention any contribution of vedanta. In the works quoted above and in many others Marx, Engels and Lenin show that they took Hegel very seriously. Their approach towards him was quite opposite to that of Bani Deshpande. They pointed out that before them Hegel was the greatest dialectician and it was he who discovered the basic laws and categories of dialectics.

But Bani Deshpande has contempt not only for Hegel and other 'western' philosophers. He has contempt for Marx, Engels and Lenin themselves. He has not openly, by name, opposed or criticised them. He has opposed them in various other ways. Besides he has reduced greatly the importance of Marxist materialist dialectics, and has all along tried to put vedanta much higher than Marxist philosophy. The vedanta philosophers had already found out and developed all the laws and categories of dialectics and what Marx and Engels did was simply to rediscover (or steal?) them. This is nothing but following the religious-chauvinists of our country, who long before Bani

were propagating that all the modern scientific discoveries, including nuclear fission, atomic bombs, airplanes, rockets, etc. and theories are to be already found in the vedas etc. and during British rule they were taken to the western countries and copied! Probably Marx and Engels also took part in such copying and stealing! "It is my firm opinion that the *Geeta* as the quintessence of the ancient vedanta philosophy is based on the doctrine of dialectics which was unknown to the west until Marx could explain it in the nineteenth century and *in its higher development is still unknown even in twentieth century*" (p 25, emphasis added). So dialectics higher than that of *Gita* is unknown even in twentieth century. Marx, Engels and Lenin did not discover anything new! "Hence I say that the ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectics in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish *but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist has so far reached*" (p 30, emphasis added).

"Hence one must remember that the dialectical outlook, its philosophy and laws are not the creation of Marx, Hegel or Aristotle. It was a fully developed concept in India long before...." (p 40).

And so on. So now the author has come out in his true colours! Marx is openly slandered in these passages. Virtually every sentence in the book aims at proving this contention. Marx, Engels and Lenin are maligned by stating they were so enamoured by vedanta that they recommended its study and research, which is an out and out white lie; that they 'unfurled the banner of vedanta'—this is showing disrespect to the great founders of scientific socialism. This is putting them in the category of reactionary revivalist religious leaders who go on fooling masses with chantings from vedanta.

The above passages prove that the author refuses to recognise the contribution of Marx, Engels and Lenin to the

philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism, history and workingclass movement. For him vedanta is much more advanced, more important than Marxism. For him vedanta itself is Marxism! Therefore may he be asked—why not renounce Marxism and declare vedanta as the official ideology of the Communist Party?

We must combat and defeat this revivalist and reactionary thinking taking a very thin cover of Marxism. Marxism-Leninism must not be allowed to be challenged.

VEDANTA AND MARXISM

N. VANAMAMALAI

The book *The Universe of Vedanta* by Bani Deshpande is beneath notice of any philosophical scholar or Marxist but for the foreword written by the chairman of the CPI and the distortions of Marxism and modern scientific concepts by the author.

S. A. Dange writes that the book was written in answer to the "many uninformed attacks on Marxism by certain wellknown preachers in their enthusiasm to preach Hindu mysticism in modernised form" (p 1).

Bani Deshpande has done precisely what the preachers of Hindu mysticism do.

With unabashed rashness he writes the following to propagate the view that vedanta philosophers "had crossed and left behind in some respects even the twentieth century in which knowledge is standing firmly rooted in the high development of natural sciences". (p 18).

He extols the achievements of vedanta thinkers high above the breathtaking advances of the scientific-technological revolution of the last quarter of a century that confirms and strengthens the concepts and categories of philosophical materialism of Marx and Engels.

Like Don Quixote of Cervantes, Bani Deshpande conjures up a giant from a wind-mill. He set himself the task of restoring "vedic philosophy to its original *highly-scientific footing*" (p 18).

How does he attempt to prove this claim of highly-scientific footing?

"The materialist of the vedanta philosophy who believed that the universe was not created by god or any such force had to prove the nonexistence of god on the basis

of the laws of dialectical development of matter" (p 19).

This assertion is left as a papal bull and the author treats the reader to a rigmarole on the laws of dialectics that have nothing to do with the existence or nonexistence of god. But he excels himself in irrelevant prattling in the passage in which he approvingly pats those who believed in god and remarks that they were also required to prove his existence "on the basis of the above (dialectical) laws" (p 19).

"So scientific was their outlook from the most ancient times", sings the devout worshipper of everything vedic (p 19).

According to Bani the arguments in favour of and against the views of existence or nonexistence of god were based on the laws of dialectics. Though there exists a prodigious volume of literature on theism and atheism and very many different schools of each he has not cared to quote or refer to any single authority. Perhaps his own assertion is sufficient authority as the shruti to vedic believers (veda pramanya).

Then he makes the pompous declaration: "Thus we see the fundamental and qualitative difference between all the schools of western thinking and vedanta philosophy" (p 20).

He goes still further:

"It was the characteristic of the vedanta philosophy *only* wherein even an idealist could not just adhere to his philosophy unless he could prove it according to the *laws of dialectics*" (p 20, emphasis added).

Bani uses philosophical terms loosely. His juggling with terms intrigues the reader.

All that is vedic is the holiest of the holy to Bani. Both materialism and idealism of the vedic thought are based on highly scientific laws of dialectics. Max Muller, a German idealist, is quoted with great satisfaction and approval. "The great merit of vedanta philosophy was that even diametrically opposite schools like idealist and materialist coexisted in Indian history for thousands of years" (p 22).

After quoting Max Muller the author proudly asserts that the vedanta philosophers "did not behead each other's heads as is seen in Greece, Rome and all through the christian and muslim history" (p 22). What a travesty of historical facts and distortion of truth!

The socalled vedanta philosophers hurled vile abuses not only against buddhists, jains, ajivakas, lokayatas and sankhyas but also against vedic schools different from their own. Yajnavalkya threatened Gargi to break her head if she persisted putting questions to him. Veerasaivas and shuddhasaivas of the south murdered thousand of jains as is evident from their own admissions in their chronicles of saivaite saints. Vulgar abuses were bandied about in their bhakti poems against each other. Every vedanta school vied with other schools of philosophy to gain the support of the king by the most unscrupulous means. Why should a Marxist try to conceal ancient persecution and intolerance, completely blacking out class struggle in the realm of ideology? Is not his chauvinist outlook that is responsible for his acrimonious outpourings against Greeks, Romans, buddhists and jainas and "western thinking"?

The prejudice against everything 'nonvedic' is quite evident when he quarrels with an unseen opponent who had dared to see elements of dialectics in neobuddhist and Greek systems of thought.

The elements of dialectics in buddhism were first pointed out by Engels:

"On the other hand, dialectical thought—precisely because it presupposes investigation of the nature of concepts themselves—is only possible for man, and for him only at a comparatively high stage of development (buddhists and Greeks), and it attains its full development much later still through modern philosophy—and yet we have the colossal results already among the Greeks..." (*Dialectics of Nature*, p 223).

According to Engels dialectics is to be found among the buddhists and Greeks. This being unpalatable to Bani, he raves against this view.

"Those who renounced this *scientific approach* for whatever social or political reasons or because of their inability to understand the *difficult science of dialectics* could only be classified as nonvedic" (pp 22-23).

The author's view is that highly-developed dialectics is to be found only in vedanta, i.e. whatever the author chooses to identify under the term vedanta. It is opposed to the view of Engels. He could not possibly refute Engels and call himself a Marxist. He could not also get over his vedantic chauvinism and accept the truth. The unknown adversary whose views he condemns and abuses is no other than the cofounder of Marxist dialectics, Engels. Here the thin veil of Marxism falls off.

He also fancies that he is debunking Indian Marxists who have pointed out elements of dialectics in buddhism, like Debiprasad and Rahul Sankrityayana. He could not have read my works because he does not know Tamil. Therefore I escape without damage.

Bani's incursions into the realm of history outbeat the adventures of Don Quixote. His adventures deserve immortalisation by a Cervantes.

"Vedanta philosophy cannot be understood unless we see it in its proper perspective and historical setting", declares the author in his preface (p 24).

Do you expect that he is going to uncover the relation between the line of social development and its ideal reflection in the mind, or the class contradictions and their ideal reflections in the spiritual world? No, nothing of the sort.

Bani's main aim appears to be his ardent desire to assert the antiquity and scientific basis of vedanta. This leads to a gross distortion of history and falsification.

His historical search begins with a conclusion. "A phenomenon such as the highly-developed dialectical thinking in India is not seen anywhere in the history of any people in the world however old and ancient they may be" (p 24).

He has hit the gold mine before a geological survey. That is scientific thinking for you!

"Since the west did not understand the dialectical outlook of vedanta and did not know it until the nineteenth century of Marx, they could not but call it mystic thinking" (p 24).

Thus begins his journey into the paths of history.

It is a fond pastime with the author to raise historical ghosts and exorcise them.

Which serious scholar has ever said "all thinking in India generally begins after Christ, when Greek knowledge is supposed to have reached India"? (p 25). Immediately our author flies into a rage and flings the question, "How is one to explain the composition of the *Geeta* which is accepted by western scholars to be not later than 4th century BC?" (p 25).

Just the story of laying the ghost he had himself conjured up.

Lot of irrelevant statements fill a page to assert the antiquity of vedas over Greek philosophy.

Then follows the Pythagoras myth, which Debi has debunked. Then a lot of dates to prove that the beginning of Greek philosophy was posterior to the date of founding of the Takshasila.

Falsifying history himself he attacks unknown falsifiers. He vents his anger on historians who assign late dates for the ancient civilisation of India. He claims that "the exact year, month and the days of the Mahabharata war has now been proved to be about 5200 years ago" (p 32). He recommends to us to "read the detailed diary of those momentous 18 days in Marathi" (p 32). The other evidence of the dates is said to be astronomical calculations. But he fails to give the date of this Marathi diary and tell us the name of the astronomer who calculated the dates of the Mahabharata war and when he lived.

Bani relies on the legends of *Vishnupurana* and *Bhavishyapurana* as primary evidences to construct his edifice of historical background. Though quite irrelevant, the

author bases his views about chaturvarna on these puranas and calls for support Marx and Engels. He considers *Vishnupurana* as "the oldest and the first exhaustive work on the geography and history of the world in man's history as was known to its writer about 2000 years ago" (p 33). That is scientific historiography for our author. The same unassailable source-material "directly establishes the known and recorded antiquity of India at least by a minimum period of 7500 years" (p 37). The author claims that "*Vishnupurana* only *confirms* the findings of Soviet scientists" (p 37). According to Bani it is not investigation and discovery that confirm a puranic statement, it is vice versa—it is the puranic statement that confirms modern discoveries. This is the scientific methodology of the author.

After having approvingly referred to the confirmation of a modern discovery by the *Vishnupurana,* he quarrels with Anikeev, a Soviet philosopher and historian of philosophy, who has criticised views similar to those of our author. He quotes Anikeev: "Often pseudoscientific and misguided patriotic enthusiasm of emphasising the scientific basis of all the concepts in the spiritual heritage of India serve to conceal a form of militant obscurantism, of religious fanaticism and national chauvinism, which are sought to be justified by their alleged past association with those achievements of civilisation which the west attained only recently" (p 39).

Any Marxist who reads the preface to Bani's book will wholeheartedly agree with this statement of the Soviet scholar and convict our author of all charges mentioned in this statement—militant obscurantism, religious fanaticism and national chauvinism. A few more charges can be added to the list—hindu chauvinism, brahmanic chauvinism and anti-Marxist falsification of Indian history.

The author does not agree with Anikeev. He says these tendencies are not there "among serious scholars in the field of history or philosophy" but "among a section of the illiterate people" (pp 39-40).

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya has made an exhaustive study of ancient Indian materialism in *Lokayata* and has made a significant contribution to the study of Indian materialism. He does not in any way equate it with modern materialism, least of all with dialectical materialism. The defects of the system that made it susceptible to defeat at the hands of various schools of idealism, the ideology of the ruling classes, are enumerated in the book.

The author who makes pretensions to be a dialectical materialist looks upon ancient lokayata as vulgar materialism and vedanta as scientific and dialectical. Charvakas, brihaspatyas and bhoothavadins were pure materialists and this is even conceded by their opponents. True they were not dialecticians.

But was vedanta materialist in content? In which of the warring schools are we to look for scientific dialectical approach?

Can dialectical method be 'highly scientific' if the content is not materialistic?

What is the heritage from the whole of the Indian philosophical tradition that the Marxists have to inherit and acclaim? Is it Indian idealism or Indian materialism? What content or thought of Indian philosophical tradition is the heritage of Indian Marxists? Is it vedanta dialectics or Marxian dialectics that Indian Marxists have to adopt as their ideology? Do Marxists accept both idealist and materialist traditions of their country as the heritage of the revolutionary class? What is the author's view on partisanship in philosophy? Is there a nonclass philosophy or ideology in the world?

In order to boost the vedanta philosophy and to discover fully-developed dialectics in it, the material our author has to conceal is enormous. "For instance Sankara's writings stand for (1) total denial of the reality of matter and the material universe, (2) total denial of the reality of change and development (dialectics), (3) condemnation of the toiling millions of the country whom he called as sudras" (Debiprasad).

In conclusion I entirely agree with Debi's poser to the author: "Does not the author with a Marxist mask on his face serve the objective class role of the ruling class when he asserts that without faith in the shruti and smriti—no philosophy could get a soil in India?"

Science in Vedanta

The first four chapters are devoted to the study of vedanta in its relation to science. As we can expect from what the author has said in his preface, he would claim for vedanta the achievement and prognostication of all the discoveries of modern science. In fact he does so.

In the first and second chapters, our author attempts to prove that the concept of matter of vedanta was the same as dialectical materialism.

"Kapila's doctrine of dialectics which is known as satkaryavada in India from antiquity is in no way different from the dialectical philosophy of Karl Marx of the nineteenth century" (p 65).

Debi has refuted this claim, and explained the real significance of satkaryavada and asatkaryavada in its historical context. They are really two opposed views of cause-effect relation. Satkaryavada holds that the effect preexists in the cause. The asatkaryavada denies this view. Satkaryavada is sankya view of causation. Vedantists who were opposed to sankya materialism conditionally accepted the sankya view on causation because it suited them to prove that the effect of brahman was not different from brahman. To quote Debi: "But satkaryavada of the samkyas was the real weakness of their dialectics, because it admitted that there is nothing new in the effect. Then there can be no qualitative changes—of new quality altogether—which is a fundamental law of dialectics as understood by Marx and Engels."

The mortal weakness of sankya dialectics, which the vedantic idealists grasped to strengthen their antidialectical system, is hailed by the author as the acme of dialectical materialism.

After centuries of stagnation, the renaissance and the industrial revolution in Europe revived interest in science —investigation of the material universe. Intellectuals in Europe turned to ancient Greek materialism and Arabian science. But the ancient knowledge was only foundation upon which a whole edifice of knowledge was to be built. The reason why Europe turned to Greece is as Engels has said "The oldest Greek philosophers were at the same time investigators of nature" (*Dialectics of Nature*, p. 186). "For all the naive materialism of the total outlook, the kernel of the later split is already found among ancient Greeks" (ibid, p 188).

To prove the superiority of vedic thought to ancient Greek thought he picks up a few facts here and there and compares them. The first attempts at classification of matter led ancient Greeks and Indians to different results. Though the classification was rudimentary and proto-scientific, it was a real classification of objects in the objective world. It was the startingpoint of scientific classification based on difference and similarity of attributes of the objects themselves. As instruments and forces of analysis were not developed, the ancients classified matter into 4 to 5 elements. In different classifications, the species under matter were not the same. The Greeks conceived of water or air or fire as the primary element from which all the four or five elements were derived. Systems of ancient Indian philosophy also produced the 'panchabhoota' classification. Different schools differed in the enumeration of the elements under the genus matter. In the classification of elements, in certain schools, akas is left out.

Instead of looking at these developments as the toddling first steps man took towards scientific and logical thinking, the author thinks that the vedic thought on classification of matter was superior to Greek thought. From the standpoint of modern theory of elements both are wrong. The list of elements has gone on increasing from four to one hundred and three and that is not the limit. The ele-

ment is a stable combination into a system of infinitesimal particles and it is possible that they may combine in an infinite variety of ways and be stable. Even now we know thousands of unstable combinations which by suitable means may be made more stable.

But our author says with undisguised pride: "Taking western thinking first, the Ionic Greeks about 4th century BC for the first time introduced the concept of water and air as the prime material for everything that exists in the universe, a school which is much discussed in Rigveda and discarded by the Indians thousands of years before the 4th century BC."

What does the author mean? Did the Rigvedic philosophers kill the Greek child, thousands of years before it was born?

Why does he mention that this "school" was discussed in Rigveda etc?

In order to assert that the Indians had discovered 5 times the number of elements the Greeks had found the author puts forward the absurd claim that "they evolved in all 25 basic elements, inclusive of sound, smell, taste, sensation, light, mind, thinking and consciousness or 'mana' as different forms of development of matter" (p 68).

On the basis of such evidence, our author triumphantly declares: "But with the new knowledge in my hand, I can say that the universality of the laws of dialectics was first declared by the ancient vedic philosophers long before Marx and Engels with the exception, as I have already said earlier, of the theory of historical materialism and surplus value" (pp 70-71).

Poor Marx and Engels! Sankaracharya has left nothing for Marx to discover except historical materialism and surplus value!

Bani arrives at the conclusion that "even modern science cannot challenge their highly scientific outlook and find any parallel in world history" (p 77).

Ignorance of historical materialism and history of science could not be more colossal!

In chapters 3 to 9, our author dabbles in ideas and laws of modern science without even an elementary knowledge of the revolution in science in the period of scientific-technological revolution which began just 30 years ago. Any college student of science will be astounded at the terrific howlers he lets loose in these chapters.

How can I discuss the rash and unfounded assertions of the author who is not acquainted with the modern atomic models, quantum theory, nuclear and electronic phenomena, the elements of the theory of relativity, cybernetics, new discoveries in the field of physical and chemical transformations, field theories, the concepts of time, mass, energy, momentum, velocity, in the nuclear world. All this is a revolution in science.

But the author trots out a few commonplace facts found in primers of science, and then jumps to the conclusion that "vedanta philosophers had established a very scientific concept of relativity of space and time in the realm of philosophy without of course the mathematical expressions and its development in the twentieth century in the field of natural science" (p 83).

How are you to argue with a writer who insists that a broken brick is a skyscraper, a pebble is a mountain, and a living cell is a man?

Bani tries to make out that the concept of space and time of the vedic philosophers was the same as the concept of relativity.

'Pradhana' or primeval matter as the source of all the universe is a sankhya concept. It was opposed by the idealist schools of vedanta. Sankara called sankhya system, pradhana-malla, his principal opponent. When idealism extraneous to the system was squeezed into it, that is the primacy of purusha, then pradhana as a derivative of purusha became acceptable to the vedantic idealists. Debi has pointed out how satkaryavada of the sankhya was conditionally accepted by the advaitis. Concealing all this historical material Bani pulls out a sentence and tells us

that "It thought itself and decided that it should manifest or grow into multitudinous forms" (p 85).

Pradhana is primeval matter. It was conceived of as undifferentiated and without parts. How according to this quotation did pradhana begin to move?—"It thought itself and decided to move"!

That knocks out the materialist content of old nirisvara sankhya. Does not this imply primacy of consciousness or ideal over pradhana, the material? Thought moves matter. Is thought ideal or material?

The minute dimensions of time and space have now been measured in terms of matter and motion. Our vedic rishis only visualised in their minds the minute dimensions of space and time. Thus, renu, an infinitesimal particle that is a part of anu, atom or kshana an infinitesimal moment of time existed only as concepts that could not be measured or perceived.

After the measurement of the diameter of atomic particles, masses of nuclei and orbital particles, their sizes, velocities, energy have now been measured in units derived from a property of these particles.

Mass of a hydrogen nucleus, the proton, is taken as unit mass. The transformation of subatomic particles losing energy takes place in a millionth fraction of a second. So time in the atomic world is measured in millionth of a second and energy in microvolts and a special system of units of measurement for the microworld has been introduced. This is science. The breathtaking advances in science and technology are more fanstastic than the most fantastic intuitive theories of all ages.

Anyone who knows a little about the revolutionary advances in modern physics and chemistry also knows that the time interval between a discovery in science and its application in technology and production has been greatly reduced.

Every school of philosophy of the ancients had a category of time and space. Materialists conceive of the two as interrelated. Ancient Greeks and Hindus had speculatively

thought out certain imaginary problems and solved them. Vyasa's method of proving annihilation of time and his definition of kshana is just such an ideationally logical exercise. But today real time intervals, real space intervals in the microworld are measured, their velocity and energy calculated and applied to technology and welfare of mankind. The ideational content is not the same nor the methods to cognise them.

Bani very often mentions time in relation to the process of development of matter. Never once does he explain what he or Vyasa means by this. All relationships of increase, decrease, concommittance and transformation, momentum are all expressed in mathematical formulas and equations. Particular, general and universal connections are expressed in a series of equations. Differential calculus and new geometry are assuming increasing importance in the age of scientific-technological revolution. Only when expressed in these forms can they be developed further when our sphere of cognition widens.

Vedanta and Knowledge

After pretending to have established the scientific foundation of vedanta, the author turns his attention to problems of cognition and knowledge.

He claims that, "In the pursuit of knowledge the Indian philosophers, it appears, had left nothing unsaid as far as possible for the human intelligence, without the aid of modern science. They had perfected the science of dialectics and had developed it to a higher stage in their science of yoga" (p 119).

What were their means to knowledge and their criterion for valid knowledge?

The author has said that it was only through intuition and yoga, the ancient sages obtained knowledge. The vedantists considered brahmavidya as the highest knowledge. Knowledge of the objective world obtained through activity upon nature was considered as inferior knowledge. "The only thing to know is brahman. Since all the

universe is contained in it, if you know brahman you will know the universe." There is nothing to know except brahman.

Hence investigation of nature and activity upon nature was neglected. Hence practice was not held as a criterion of truth or knowledge. Intuition was enthroned. Therefore knowledge became metaphysical.

Extreme subjective idealism arose, because of the separation of manual and mental activity. Those who pursued brahmavidya did not work nor investigate nature that involved an objective outlook, but subsisted on sudra labour.

Unity of the Universe

Every school of philosophy has a category called unity of the universe to evolve a conceptual system out of the seeming chaos of the events, processes and phenomena in the universe. This concept of unity may be idealistic or materialistic. Absolute idealistic monism is a solution to the problem. The idea of matter being the ultimate source and basis of the universe is another solution contradicting the first. In any solution one has to make a choice between the primacy of matter or spirit.

Now what sort of unity in the universe does vedanta conceive of, according to Bani?

Concealing all the contrary evidence, he makes the bold assertion that "Indians had come to a point of boldly understanding and establishing the materiality of the underlying basis of physical reality in the same way as our sciences followed" (p 124).

Bani has not attempted to prove this preposterous assertion by quoting from the philosophical texts of the vedic schools. Even assuming that he could find evidence for supporting his thesis he cannot prove that vedantic schools think that the material universe had its origin in matter. The acceptance of the primacy of matter over consciousness is the criterion for materialism. Which vedantic school accepts this view? None.

After asserting that Indians had accepted the materiality he tried to prove that ancient Indians had conceived of the material unity of the universe long before modern scientists and Marx and Engels.

What are the elements of evidence he marshals to support of his thesis?

(1) "No serious vedic philosopher has ever considered the earth to be the centre of the universe as was believed in the west until the fourteenth century" (p 127). Jerusalem was believed to be in the centre of the world.

(2) "More than a thousand years before Copernicus Arya Bhat...proved for the first time that it was the earth which was moving round the sun" (p 127).

(3) "The earth is like an atom...against the vast expanse of the dark sky" (p 128).

(4) "Three thousand years ago, Vyasa ventured to calculate the size of the world and arrived at a fantastic figure of *four thousand million miles*" (p 128).

"Having thus arrived at such an understanding of the universe, they considered the infinite multitude of objects, phenomena and forces of nature, not in separate existence but interconnected having material origin" (p 128).

How is this general conclusion warranted by the four premises adduced?

The thinking both in the revolution of the earth round the sun and the sun round the earth involves motion of matter. Whether they are factually correct or incorrect the concept is one of material motion. The lines of thought are not contradictory.

The relative size of the earth to the universe was expressed in analogies and similes by astronomers of many countries such as an atom against the vast expanse of the sky or a grain of sand against the seashore or a drop of water against the watery expanse of the sea. This concept that the earth is very small in comparison to the universe arose among all people who surpassed tribal limitations thousands of years ago and especially among those who

crossed the seas and peered into the sky from sailing ships.

Bani says that Vyasa calculated the size of the earth and arrived at the figure of four thousand million miles. Obviously he accepts the figure as correct.

Even if Vyasa could confuse length with size, how could a twentieth century scholar accept the answer in miles for the size of the earth? This is the highly scientific outlook of Vyasa, according to the author.

"Sensation, sound, smell and taste are extraordinary subtle elements of nature which evolve in the course of development of *matter*" (p 129).

How is element defined?

Can Bani quote Vyasa purporting to convey the meaning that sensations and perceptions are derived from matter? Does he believe that Vyasa thought of sensations and perceptions as the activity of the sense organs and nervous system?

And finally is brahman an ideal category or a material category? Is it also derived from matter? If Bani argues that brahman is a derivative of matter, will it be in agreement with the views of the smritis and shrutis?

In the chapter devoted to knowability of the world, Bani attributes a number of modern discoveries to the vedic philosophers (pp 131-34):

(1) "Indians knew electricity and created it."

(2) "They tried to understand the phenomenon of electrical explosion."

(3) "Mantravidya is nothing but electrotheraphy of modern medicine."

(4) "They knew the effect of changing phases of the moon on blood circulation."

(5) "They were challenging the powers of brahma and hoping to subdue them to the service of man."

(6) "They had discovered the law of indestructibility of matter."

What follows from all this in the opinion of Bani?

"Vedanta includes still further knowledge *beyond this*

point of modern science which we shall discuss in brahmavidya or the science of yoga" (p 135).

No comment is necessary, if he had known anything about the achievements of scientific-technological revolution, he would have claimed all of them for his vedantic clients.

The Message of the Book

The last chapter, "Vedic Outlook" is really a plea for adopting the vedanta as a guide for the solution of all social problems of the twentieth century.

This plea is expressed indirectly in the following:

"The vedanta philosophers were so proud and confident of the superiority of their philosophy, being conscious of the fact that for a scientific understanding no further thinking was humanly possible" (p 155).

Then follows a quotation in Sanskrit from *Geeta Rahasya:*

"Vedanta philosophy was like a lion, the king, at the sight of which jackals of every school of philosophy take to their heels" (p 155).

Then the author makes a comment:

"To the question whether it is really haunting the *jackals* in the twentieth century having raised its head again in the nineteenth century Europe after their correct prediction of 5200 years ago, perhaps there may never be an answer unless all the Indians...unite to lead the world, for disunity alone has been their bane for the past few thousand years" (pp 155-56).

One is tempted to ask a few questions.

Is it the desire of our author that the jackals of other schools of philosophy should be scared and driven away by the vedanta lion. Will he make an exception for Marxism or will he include Marxism too among the jackals?

What is the *correct* prediction about the advent of the age of plenty and prosperity? The author has mentioned this prophecy, according to which "society was to enter

the age of plenty and happiness of the Tretayuga exactly 5000 years after the Mahabarat war as per Yudhisthir calendar ... such a stage was to be reached exactly at the end of the 18th century" (p 149).

The author sincerely believes that the prediction has come true with the industrial revolution, because, "with the development of modern means of production, a time has come when society has to jump into a stage in which social, economic and intellectual exploitation of man by man will be done away with" (p 149).

There is one parallel to this madness, the promise of millennium in the Old Testament and the belief in their prophecy of christian fanatics. The difference is only in the denomination.

For entering into the Tretayuga or golden age Indians should unite and under the banner of vedanta march to drive away the jackals. Clearly no exception is made for Marxism.

The cycle of yugas is interpreted by the author as historical development. No, it is the fantastic reflection of the past tribal life as a golden age and class society as a corruption of the golden age and the desire of the people living under class society to go back to the imaginary golden age.

I shall end this critique after briefly referring to the author's effusions on Marx and Marxism.

"Thus while vedanta philosophy lay deeply submerged in the ignorance of Indians, Karl Marx with his own great genius and brilliant originality once again unfurled the flag of vedanta over the world, establishing its philosophy and theories, its dialectical laws and scientific outlook which engulfed the whole of the oppressed mankind groping its way for emancipation and ultimate happiness" (p 152).

This about the role of Marx in history.

In the concluding page of the book we find:

"Hence I would now conclude my treatise with the words of Karl Marx who said, 'as philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapon in philosophy'. And in the words of Marx, I would again say that once *the lightning of a correct thought* has squarely struck the ingenuous soil of the Indian people, the emancipation of *Indians* into *men* will be accomplished" (pp 159-60).

To the author, Marx is a Krishna or Sankara who incarnated in nineteenth century destined to revive the glory of slumbering vedanta. He has fulfilled the task of his incarnation of unfurling the flag of vedanta over the world!

The philosophy that will guide the revolutionary movement in India is not Marxism. It is "*the lightning of a correct thought*" that has squarely struck the ingenuous soil of India. Though Bani Deshpande does not mention it, it is very clear from what he had said about Marx, that vedanta is the ingenuous philosophy that will guide Indian revolution and emancipate "Indians into men".

I wonder if Dange read the last chapter of the book. It is the declaration of faith of a Hindu chauvinist and revivalist attempting to masquerade as a Marxist by indulging in Marxist jargon.

"THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"— A TOTAL REPUDIATION OF MARXISM

HARBANS SINGH

I

It has been asserted that if ancient Greeks could make 'brilliant intuitions' about which Engels had written so glowingly, then ancient Indian vedantist seers also could make similar brilliant intuitions bordering on the discovery and perfection of dialectical and historical materialism.

What is the basis of brilliant intuitions made by the ancient Greeks? Primitive dialectics! Ancient Indians, Chinese and Greeks all had known primitive dialectics. On the threshold of civilisation, when mankind broke its umbilical cord with nature, at the first flush of separation of mental and manual labour, man could see the interconnections of nature, man and society, he could see the continuous flux and he could also observe the superficial opposites. These are the three essential elements of primitive dialectics. Thus this man standing at the beginning of class society could see the picture as a whole, with its individual parts still more or less kept in the background; he could observe the movements, transitions, connections in a flux, he could note the superficial opposites. This primitive, naive but intrinsically correct conception of the world enabled the ancient man to make certain brilliant intuitions, prognoses, speculations, etc.

"But this conception, correctly as it expresses the general character of the picture of appearance as a whole, does not suffice to explain the details of which this picture is made up, and so long as we do not understand these, we

have not a clear idea of the whole picture" (Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, III, p 127).

What is the relation between primitive dialectics and Marxist dialectics? It is the same relationship as that between primitive communism and scientific communism. Therefore it is impermissible for any Marxist to equate the ideas and discoveries based on primitive dialectics with those of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

II

That ancient Indians had known primitive dialectics is indisputable. Different groups and sections of ancient Indian people utilised primitive dialectics differently. The ruling class of the emerging slave states utilised dialectics to develop and perfect a vicious idealist philosophy of vedanta based upon chaturvarna, veda-pramanya and brahma-concept of chaturvarna, wherein brahmins and kshatriyas were the ruling classes and shudras and vaisyas were the ruled, was reinforced by the karma theory, first propounded by Pravahan Jaibali the teacher of Yajnavalkya. How did he propound it? The soul of each dead goes via air, sunrays and then via moonrays, to brahma, where in accordance with the deeds of the dead man the fate and status in life of the same soul is determined.

But primitive dialectics was also used by lokayatikas to develop their materialist ideology in mortal combat with the ruling vedantavadis.

Primitive dialectics was also used by scientists in various tribal republics. Science instinctively moves towards materialism. Hence we find various materialist philosophies in India, using primitive dialectics, in pursuit of natural sciences. The most outstanding centre of such scientific pursuit was Taxila with Charak traditions of science. "Do not believe in anything you cannot prove", was the motto of Taxila science in direct opposition to vedapramanya.

When Bani says: "It is immaterial from the point of view of vedanta philosophy if one is an idealist or materialist" (p 20), he has totally repudiated Marxism. He has denied class struggle in ancient India and in fact joined hands with the oppressors and obscurantists against the scientists and oppressed people of India.

Our fundamental task today is to reconstruct our scientific heritage, our heritage of materialist culture and philosophy. Unfortunately the revivalist traditions of our national movement have put a deep sinister veil on our materialist heritage. It was declared "west is materialist and east is spiritualist", "west means exploitation and degeneration and hence every western ideology must be cast aside. Everything pertaining to ancient India is glorious and spiritual." Our militant revivalists fought against British imperialism with the flag of vedanta, chaturvarna and *Geeta*. They rejected the scientific, materialist heritage both of the west and the east. Today the same flag of eastern spiritualism is the flag of the most reactionary forces of India and they are united with the existentialist spirituality of the west. It is an urgent task to discover and reconstruct our history of relentless struggle through the centuries against vedantist idealism.

In this connection I highly object to the use of the name of Aryabhat by Bani (p 127), and for the following reasons. Alberuni, a great astronomer, was deeply enamoured by the works of Aryabhat. He, for 13 years, searched in vain for written works of Aryabhat. All that he found was books by Brahmagupta and Varahamihira full of abuses hurled at Aryabhat. Alberuni then reconstructed the ideas of Aryabhat from the abuses hurled at him. Aryabhat did not discover that the earth was moving round the sun. He discovered the rotation of earth round its own axis and said that there was no rahu or ketu and that the moon was in between the sun and earth and that the eclipse was nothing but the shadow of earth on the moon and that of the moon on the sun. Aryabhat challenged the authority of vedas by declaring that the moon was nearer

than the sun, and that there was no rahu and ketu. Hence his books were burnt and all the vedantist scientists and ideologues abused him. Vedantavadis, all through the centuries, even while utilising scientific truths, continued their ruthless war against genuine scientists and scientific materialist ideas.

III

Bani has asserted, "Hence I say that the ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far has reached... Though it can be said that the basis of the law of historical materialism in its essence was correctly grasped by the ancient vedic philosophers though empirically..." (pp 30-31).

How did Marxist dialectics arise? After the collapse of ancient society a long period had to elapse before a certain amount of natural and historical material could be collected by mankind. "Real natural science dates from the second half of the fifteenth century, and thence onward it had advanced with constantly increasing rapidity" (Marx & Engels, SW III, p 127). But this knowledge about individual things and phenomena was gathered by observing them in isolation, in respose, in death. Hence, natural science developed under the background of metaphysics.

After the bourgeois revolution in western Europe and revolutionary advances in natural science it was possible to rediscover the laws of dialectics. But this advanced dialectics discovered by Hegel was in the integument of idealism. How then was this idealist dialectics transformed into revolutionary dialectics? Says Engels: "For we live not only in nature but also in human society, and this also no less than nature has its history of development and its science. It was therefore a question of bringing the science of society, i.e. the sum total of the socalled historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist

foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon" (M-E, SW III, p 351).

Engels clearly asserts that the discovery of historical materialism was essential for putting Hegelian dialectic on its feet. But Engels clearly lays down two conditions for the possibility of discovering historical materialism. By the beginning of 19th century all the promises of bourgeois revolutions had turned into bitterly disappointing caricatures. Says Engels: "To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories" (M-E, SW III, p 119). Thus in the early 19th century only utopian socialism could be postulated. "Since the establishment of largescale industry, i.e. at least since the European peace of 1815, it has been no longer a secret to any man in England that the whole political struggle there turned on the claims to supremacy of two classes, the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (middle class) ... And since 1830 the working class, the proletariat, has been recognised in both countries as a third competitor for power" (M-E, SW III, p 368). Engels further says: "The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles, that these warring classes of society are always the products of the modes of production and of exchange—in a word, of the *economic* conditions of their time; that the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical and other ideas of a given historical period" (M-E, SW III, p 132). Engels very clearly asserts: "Modern socialism is nothing but the reflex, in thought, of this conflict in fact; its ideal reflection in the minds, first, of the class directly suffering under it, the working class" (M-E, SW III, pp 134-35).

Thus Bani's book is a virtual declaration of war against Marxism.

IV

It is very interesting to note that maoist philosophers are also making similar claims as Bani is making. We read in the *Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions* by Soviet authors that one professor Chu Chien-chi asserts "Marxist dialectical materialism is essentially connected with European philosophy of the 18th century and the Eurcpean philosophy of 18th century is essentially connected with Chinese philosophy. This means that as it penetrated Europe, Chinese philosophers exerted, on the one hand, a direct influence on French materialist philosophy, and on the other, a direct influence on the dialectics of German idealism. These materialism and dialectics were precisely the important source on which Marx and Engels drew in shaping their dialectical materialism" (p 19n).

This is the ideological foundation of sinicising Marxism. If we permit to let go the book *The Universe of Vedanta* without repudiation we shall lay down the foundation of indianisation, or, to be more correct, the vedantisation of Marxism in India.

"THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"—A REVIEW

JAGADISH DAS GUPTA

The claim that the vedanta philosophy is superior to all other philosophies—ancient and modern, has been made quite often by Hindu religious fanatics. There is nothing surprising about it. But the author of the book *The Universe of Vedanta,* Bani Deshpande, claims to be a Marxist and after analysing the philosophical literatures of vedanta by the methodology of dialectical materialism has arrived at the conclusion that the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels as also the latest developments in science were anticipated and foretold by vedanta philosophers. He even goes further and claims that "they (vedanta philosophers) had even made greater progress than our century and had laid down answers to many questions which modern science is still groping to discover. It may sound odd, but it is true" (p 44). He has made similar claims regarding the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

This is an extremely serious matter for the working-class revolutionaries struggling for socialism in India and abroad, as also for the scientists seeking truth through their researches. If the author's claims can be established then the study of vedanta and practice of yoga should become the modus operandi for the salvation of the working class and for the enlightenment of the scientists. But the way our author challenges the entire edifice of Marxism and of modern science, completely denying the role of development of society, of technological advance and of the history of science, by quoting a few stray sentences and aphorisms from opposite schools of Indian philosophy, raises serious doubts about the author's intention of defending Marxism and modern science. The author must have

been aware that the imperialists and maoists are today using popular sentiments about their ancient heritages as a weapon against communism. The author, unfortunately, has not taken sufficient care to prevent such misuse of his conclusions. Before taking up the review of the book, I would like to remind the author that his claim that the vedanta philosophers knew everything about modern science and modern philosophy and his approving reference to the definition of vedanta "as the end of knowledge", is not only undialectical but antidialectical. In *Anti-Duhring* Engels wrote: "If mankind ever reached a stage at which it should only work with eternal truths, with results of thought which possess sovereign validity and an unconditional claim to truth, it would then have reached the point where the infinity of the intellectual world both in its actuality and in its potentiality had been exhausted, and thus the famous miracle of the counted uncountable would have been performed" (p 106).

In the preface the author asserts that it is "incorrect and futile" to try to categorise vedanta philosophy as materialistic or idealistic because, according to him, the outlook of those philosophers was so scientific that whether they believed in the existence of god or not, they used the laws of idealistics to justify their conclusions. Even if we accept the author's contention that the vedanta philosophers were all dialecticians, does it necessarily follow that their philosophical systems were materialistic? Hegel, for example, was a dialectician, par excellence, nevertheless his dialectics has an idealistic basis. Engels remarks: "To him the thoughts within the brain were not the more or less abstract pictures of actual things and processes, but, conversely, things and their evolution were only the realised picture of the 'Idea', existing somewhere from eternity before the world was. This way of thinking turned everything upside down, and completely reversed the actual connection of things in the world... The Hegelian system, in itself, was a colossal miscarriage" (*Anti-Duhring*, pp 34-35). Even the Young Hegelians, who were strong

critics of religion and the gospels, had idealistic trends. In fact, idealism was their fundamental weakness, even though they were dialecticians. In contrast to Hegel, they inclined to a subjectivist view of history and tended to underestimate men's practical activity, especially mass action, by pinning their faith on the omnipotence of theoretical criticism and believing that critical thinking by outstanding personalities could assure progress of man's selfconsciousness and, consequently, all progress in general. In the *Theses on Feuerbach,* which according to Engels, "the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germs of the new world outlook", the central idea is the decisive role of revolutionary practice in the life of society. Marx says that practice is the point of departure, the basis, the criterion and the purpose of everything and consequently also of philosophical cognition. This introduction of the category of practice into the theory of cognition marked a real revolution in epistemology, as it was destined to be one of the main elements behind the revolution in the whole of philosophy. It was from this outlook that Marx criticised old materialism for being contemplative, and idealism, for reducing practice to purely theoretical terms.

I have mentioned in some details the Marxist method of assessing philosophical systems because in the discussion on the book, Dange justified the detatchment of dialectics from idealism or materialism, or in other words, the methodology from the philosophical system and suggested consideration of dialectics as such, i.e. in abstraction. I believe such metaphysical approach contradicts the very essence of Marxism. I have not been able to find out the author's opinions about the criterion of practice mentioned above. The author's reference to yoga and Dange's arguments in support of the practice of yoga cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be considered as a substitute for the criterion of practice. I hope that even the author would not make such a ridiculous claim. I have looked through the book to find the programme of revolutionary

practice of the ancient vedanta philosophers without much success. But our author does not seem to be bothered about the scientific basis of assessing philosophical systems. In his chauvinistic attempt to blow the trumpet of vedanta he arrogantly declares, like a philistine, that the "ancient Indian thinkers developed the doctrine of dialectic in the realm of philosophy not only up to the point of perfection which only Marx could accomplish but even developed it to an amazingly higher level which no philosopher or scientist so far reached" (p 30).

Anyway let us proceed to find out what further gems of thought the author has in store for us.

I do not intend to discuss the authenticity of the author's interpretation of vedanta philosophy because Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya who is immensely more competent than myself has dealt with this problem in his extremely valuable contribution.

In the preface, the author makes a dig at Pythagoras, only to spite ancient Greek philosophers and scientists, who it seems could not learn very much from his brahmin guru except the theorem of geometry, which he apparently plagiarised, and of course vegetarianism.

As a matter of fact, long before Pythagoras or his hoary brahmin guru, the Babylonians had worked out a large number of values of the lengths of the hypotenuse of rightangled triangles of various dimensions and wrote them in their cuneiform tablets. Pythagoras became suddenly conscious, while working out the equation, of the mental power, called mathematical reasoning, and regarded mathematical theorem as revelations of the fundamental principles on which the universe is constructed. This is precisely why he was much respected and Plato, one of his disciples, started in Athens the "Pythagorean School of Mathematics". In addition, Pythagoras also made some very valuable contributions in physics of sound—in harmonics, which is the basis of certain modern concepts. But our author is least interested in all these precise facts. Incidentally Pythagoras, though a vegetarian,

prohibited the eating of 'beans'. Bani Deshpande may look up for some aphorisms of vedanta for its justification.

The author deserves applause for introducing regionalism in science by captioning his Chapter I as "Western Concept of Matter"! We shall keenly await his discourses on "Maharashtrian Concept of Matter". This is indeed ridiculous. But let us have patience because more wonders are in store.

The author, however, could not decide whether to take up the study of matter as a philosophical category or discuss its physicochemical structures. After explaining the difference between an idealist and a materialist on the basis of their attitude towards matter, he embarks on the ambitious project of explaining "how the concept of matter evolved and developed in the field of philosophy as well as science in the ancient and modern times" (p 61). But what the author presents is some scrappy lines about Thales of Miletus, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Democritus and mentions the names of Aristotle, Epicurus and Lacretius in the field of philosophy and just one line about Newton regarding mass as fundamental attribute of matter. This is supposed to be the summary of the concept of matter in the west up to the beginning of the 20th century. It is amazing how one could be so shameless as to display publicly one's utter ignorance about either philosophy or science. The author reviews the dialectics of the ancient Greeks or rather quotes a passage from Afanasyev, but he makes no mention of the brilliant exponents of dialectics, in the west, like Descartes and Spinoza or Diderot and Rousseau. Even Hegel does not find a berth here. And about "western" science not a word except one line about Newton. The author is completely oblivious about the controversies that went on among the philosophers of the west in regard to the relation of matter and consciousness and the different schools of philosophy formed on the basis of their approach to this cardinal relation. And yet the author threatens to enlighten us about the western concept of matter. But let us proceed.

About the modern concept of matter he just casually mentions that till Newton's time matter was considered as compound of atoms and their mass was considered as the fundamental attribute and that Einstein's postulate destroyed the age-old concept of indivisibility and indestructibility of the atoms. He does not seem to be aware of the crisis in physics created by James Jeans and Arthur Eddington's mayavada, of the wave-particle duality, of the philosophical implications of Heisenberg's indeterminacy theory, of the controversies now going on about subquantum phenomenon, of the challenge to Eienstein's special and general theory of relativity—all of which have bearing on the concept of matter and incidentally are "western". Our author does not even care for all these details even while claiming that the vedanta philosophers knew the answers to the questions which modern science in the west is still to find out. This is the limit of hypocrisy.

Let us now examine what the author has to say about the vedic concept of matter. The author has not given any comprehensive or even connected description about these concepts. He has only quoted some fragmentary sutras and few sentences taken out of context from opposing schools of Indian philosophy and on the basis of these has asserted, again and again as a refrain, that these concepts are superior to anything western, ancient or contemporary. The author does not care to verify whether the materialist concept of matter as "the property of being objective reality, of existing outside our cognition" (Lenin) was categorically declared by Badarayana in *Brahmasutra* as explained by Sankara. Even if we accept the unqualified assertions of the author, for the sake of argument, that vedic philosophers already knew the following principles: (1) matter and universe are eternal, (2) matter is evolving and developing dialectically in its various manifestations, (3) matter is primary and there is no creator, (4) matter is selfmoving and motion inside matter is a quality of matter, (5) matter developed into

two branches, inorganic and organic, (6) there are 25 elements, (7) the law of conservation of matter, (8) sense of time and measurements of time, and (9) the evolution of species—even then these philosophers cannot claim any superiority over the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome.

The Roman philosopher, Lucretius, who was an Epicurean, in his poem "Of the Nature of Things" gives a much clearer exposition of the atomic world as understood by the Greek philosophers. The salient features are as follows: (1) material objects are of two kinds, atoms and compounds of atoms, (2) atoms are indestructible, (3) atoms are seeds or prime units of things from which the universe is built up, (4) hence if atoms are solids and without vacuity, they must be everlasting, (5) atoms move and that it is by atoms moving that you get the variety of things, (6) the atoms move in empty space and what might be called the principle of persistent motion or even inertia, (7) atoms could not stay just in space, they have to be always falling, (8) if the atoms are falling, how did they meet each other to make all these combinations? The answer is "the atom swerves a little—but only a little...", (9) the sum of things cannot be changed by any force. For there is no place into which any kind of matter might escape out of the universe or out of which some newly-arisen force could break up and transform the whole nature of things and reverse the movements. They also had some elementary ideas about reproduction of species. One can very easily notice the clarity of vision of these ancient Greek philosophers when compared with what our author has to say about the views of vedanta philosophers in these matters.

I am sure, however, that Indian philosophers were much more precise than what Bani Deshpande made of their views to suit his own conclusions. But let us examine the evidences produced by the author to justify the conclusions he has made. The only valid evidence that the author provides to justify that vedanta philosophers

rejected the creator-concept is as follows. While in India there are temples dedicated to Vishnu and Maheswar, who are representatives of stability (sthiti) and deluge (pralay), there is no temple dedicated to Brahma (creator). He writes: "Creator as a supernatural force, different from the creation, therefore does not exist and has no place in any vedic thinking. It is for this reason also that in spite of the ancient mythological concept of the creator in the form of the Trimurty or trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, only Vishnu and Mahesh (also known as Shankar or Mahadeo) have found an abode in the millions of temples of India but there is not a single temple for Brahma, the chief creator, in spite of the deep antiquity of Indian history and civilisation" (p 66). Firstly, the statement is not true, there are a large number of temples of Brahma in India, I myself have seen an excellent idol of Brahma at the Sarnath Museum at Varanasi, and secondly such evidences are frivolous, to say the least.

What is the evidence that the vedantins knew about the splitting of atoms? From the sutra: Yathapakarshaparyantam dravyam paramanurevam; Paramapakarshaparyantah kalah kshanah, the author has played a trick by declaring that the word paramapakarsha has been used in connection with dravyam while simple apakarsha has been used for kala. In reality the reverse is true. Basing on this trickery the author asserts (pp 89-90) that the vedantins meant by paramapakarsha the splitting of atoms. Can hypocrisy go any far? The author has avoided presenting the composite picture of the universe of matter as outlined in *Brahmasutra* which can only give the proper perspectives and views of the vedantins in respect of matter. Debiprasad has elaborated these views in his contribution and has shown that our author's views contradict the very essence of the vedanta concept of matter.

Our author, however, has used the technique of quoting some stray sutras completely out of context and goes on declaring ad nauseam that everything Marx and Engels and the modern scientists did discover or could not yet

discover were known to the vedantins. It would appear, therefore, that the vedanta philosophy is like Hegel's "idea" existing somewhere from eternity and all that man has created so far and will create in future will be nothing more than the unfolding of the master plan left by the vedantins. And yet our author claims to be a dialectical materialist. I conclude this discussion with a quotation from Lenin: "In the theory of knowledge, as in every branch of science, we must think dialectically, i.e. we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how knowledge emerges from ignorance, how incomplete inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact" (*Materialism and Empirio-criticism,* p 89). This is the methodology of dialectical materialism. I wish the author had learnt this before claiming that Marx unfurled the banner of vedanta.

Chapter III of the book claims to describe "Space and Time in Modern Science", an ambitious project even for a qualified scientist. How does he describe it? He writes like a naive child:

"Every object in the universe, from the smallest to the biggest, from the atomic nucleus to the biggest of celestial bodies exists in three dimensions. In other words, they have length, breadth and height. In addition to this they also exist in a definite position in relation to each other. They may be to the left or to the right, higher or lower, closer or further to each other inside what we call space" (p 80).

Firstly, the author does not know even the elements of relativity nor is he aware that Einstein's views should be presented in the perspective of the 19th-century developments in physics to make them understandable to the uninitiated. We know that to both Newton and Maxwell, space was not vacuum or immaterial, as our author claims. It was absolute. It was independent of the material bodies existing in it. To Newton space served as the agent responsible for a particle's resistance to acceleration, to Maxwell—in the guise of aether—it was the carrier of electromagnetic

waves. Einstein's special relativity abolished it in the Maxwellian sense and general relativity abolished it in the Newtonian sense as well. Relativity regards the world as consisting not of things but of processes or events. It followed from Einstein's theories that the classical theory of space and time must be rejected as being metaphysical, that is to say, as postulating something beyond matter, namely an abstract space and time, which had properties apart from those of any events going on in them. Such a postulate could only be justified if we know of the existence of something more fundamental than matter, using matter in the broadest sense to cover processes as well as things. Einstein's greatest contribution to scientific philosophy is the simple principle that if a thing or a process is essentially unobservable, it does not exist. Our author does not need to know all these and yet he writes a treatise on the scientific philosophy of modern times. The author's formulations like "time depends on velocity" is childish. Special relativity says that "time and space separation between events depends on the choice of motion of the observer". Evidently precision does not seem to be strong point of our philosopher-scientist. Bani Deshpande is not even aware of the implications of general relativity. General relativity, like special relativity, pictures the world as four dimensional continuum, but according to it this space is curved by the matters present in it. Particles and light rays are postulated to move along geodesics in this form of space. In other words, space is not just something which indicates the position of material bodies in it, it is also affected by the matters present in it (more in accord with the law of interaction). I may mention in this connection that Einstein's concept of space-time continuum is being contested by modern scientists—one of them an Indian. This approach consists in an attempt to quantise space-time itself, i.e. to assign space and time jointly as discontinuous structures involving elementary lengths and durations, instead of simply quantising phenomena in a continuous space-time framework. This concept if fruitful

would seriously upset the current notion of time (A. Das, *Nuovo Cimento* 18, 482, 1962).

About intuition: the author writes a long panegyric on intuition and arrives at the conclusion that: "Einstein's great discovery of the deflection of starlight in the gravitational field of the sun, or Marx's intuition for the development of the theory of historical materialism and surplus value or Lenin's intuition in the discovery of the theory of revolution are examples of correct and brilliant intuitions proved by history" (p 47). Without going into the theoretical aspect of the problem of intuition, which has been taken up by other contributors, let us see how far the author's conclusion is justified in the case of Einstein's discoveries. Every school student knows the background of Einstein's discovery of the theory of relativity. When Michelson and Morley's experiment (1887) on aether drift failed to show any variation in the velocity of light, which remains the same whether the observer is advancing to meet the rays or whether he is running away from them, scientists were faced with the unpalatable fact that Newtonian relativity can no longer be considered universally valid. The experiment was repeated several times but the result remained the same. The way out from this was shown by Einstein in 1905 by his special theory of relativity. It must be realised that Einstein starts from an observed fact, the fact of the constancy of the velocity of light and deduced from it that space and time measurements are relative. Even then, the true significance of Einstein's theory was not realised until Minkowski gave his celebrated address on space and time in 1908. Minkowski showed that Einstein's doctrine followed naturally if we regard space and time as being aspects of a more fundamental reality—the four-dimensional space-time continuum. Are all these mere intuitions? Again, how did Einstein predict about the deflection of starlights? Einstein's prediction followed from his general theory of relativity in which he makes gravitation an inherent property of space-time. He adopted the Riemannian geometry to prove his

conclusions. It follows from this theory that the path of rays must, of course, be just as obedient to the laws of geometry as is any other path. Accordingly, a ray of light passing through what we call a gravitational field must follow the path appropriate to that field. This means, in practice, that a ray of light from a distant star, passing near the sun, will be deflected, and the star will appear to be displaced in the sky. This statement was checked by observation during times of eclipse and it was verified that the stars are displaced to the precise extent indicated by Einstein's theory. Well, Bani Deshpande! this is not just intuition, this is rigorous mathematical deduction preceded by a long development of physics. When Einstein was eulogised by some correspondents for his discoveries, he retorted by saying: "All I did was to study the history of physics." The author does not have the elementary ideas about the subjects on which he is writing a thesis. But let us pass on.

Let us see what the author claims as "Concept of Space and Time in Vedanta". From a single word 'pradhana' and a simple sentence which he explains as follows: "In answer to the question, how motion is created in matter, they replied 'bahu syam prajayeyeti' meaning it thought itself and decided that it should manifest or grow into multitudinous forms. They called it selfmoving and thus began to move" (p 85), he claims to have deduced that motion is an inherent property of matter, the principle which causes such disturbance in the structure of the matter for the eternal and infinite dialectical development, and also that matter is eternal and constantly undergoing change etc. and matter and motion are inseparable. It is amazing how the author could deduce all these from the simple quctation; "bahu syam prajayeyeti". The author writes: "It is selfevident from this explanation that the concept of space, time, motion and a definite place are only symbolised to have material existence but they are also shown so closely interconnected with and inseparable from each other in the beautiful simile of being the four feet on

which brahma rests" (p 87). What is his source material? The upanishad story about brahma having four feet, viz prakashvan, anantavan, jyotisman and ayatanavan which Satyakama learns from Haridrumat (p 86). Can you beat it?

More of such ravings as we proceed. He asserts the following without providing any evidence: That the vedic thinkers knew that (1) every object has its existence only in space; (2) matter is not an absolute whole, is not indestructible; (3) any object or even a phenomenon of nature is made of definite and several particles of different elements, not indivisible, culminating in their process of dialectical development into forms of light, sound or consciousness. Well, if you ask how one can get all these ideas? My answer would be: "Elementary, my dear Watson, use your intuitions and you will know about it."

The author quotes a passage from Vyasa's explanation wherein the words 'purvadesham' and 'uttaradesham' appear in connection with the definition of moment or kshana. The author translates them as 'east' and 'west' respectively and deduced that "a moment is the time required to go round from the east to west of an infinitesimal particle or 'paramanu' of a substance or 'dravyam'" (p 92). Not content with this explanation the author builds up an entire edifice about the relativity of space-time by drawing diagrams in the following chapter. This is indeed the limit. Pardon me if I am rude, but I cannot help saying that the author is either a fool or a knave. I do not think any further review of the book deserves consideration.

I entirely agree with the resolution of the CEC of the CPI dissociating the party from the views expressed in this book.

SOME COMMENTS ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

P. GUPTA

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treat it as a supernatural, mystical, cognitive ability. At the same time intuition plays a subsidiary role in the process of scientific cognition and aesthetical apprehension of the reality. Intuition must not be considered as a kind of fundamental deviation from the usual ways of knowing the truth, it is a natural form of their manifestation based on logical thinking and practice. Behind the ability 'suddenly' to grasp the truth, are in reality, accumulated experience and knowledge" (p 221).

Therefore the intuitive ability of man is also historically conditional. Compare this statement with that of Dange and Deshpande.

Debi Chattopadhyaya had exhaustively scrutinued some of the original texts and exposed the hollowness of Deshpande's claim I shall deal with only one.

Basing himself on Chandogya Upanishad (IV-8-4), Deshpande contends brahma rests on four feet known as 'Prakashvan', 'anantavan', 'jyotishman' and 'ayatanavan'. According to him prakashvan stands for space, anantavan for time, while jyotishman for motion and ayatanavan for definite place. Without adducing any suitable reasons for such a comprehension he merely asserts the following:

"Thus the four characteristics of space, time, motion and a definite place for every object in this universe were attributed to brahma ... the concept of space, time, motion and a definite place are not only symbolised to have material existence but they are also shown as closely interconnected with and inseparable from each other" (pp 86-87).

In order to avoid any scope for confusion, let us examine what *Chand Up* does mean by these terms. We base our scrutiny on Hume's translation in *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*:

(1) Prakashvan, the shining, is the quarter of brahma consisting of east, west, south and north.

(2) Anantavan, the endless, is the quarter of brahma consisting of earth, atmosphere, sky and ocean.

(3) Jyotishman, the luminous, is the quarter of brahma consisting of fire, sun, moon and lightning.

(4) Ayatanavan, the possessing-a-support, is the quarter of brahma consisting of breath, eye, ear and mind.

By any stretch of imagination, one cannot compare these terms with space, time, motion etc. In fact, we come across similar attempts to determine the various components of brahma in different upanishads. For example *Br Ar Up* (fourth adhyaya), brahma is construed as a combination of breath, sight, hearing, mind and heart. It is rather peurile and ridiculous to try to find something profound like the postulate of time-space continuum in these archaic concepts of upanishads. Instead we should endeavour to find out the genesis and at the same time the significance of these cosmobiological, cosmometeorological and cosmo-terrestrial hymns.

For example, hymns concerning ayatanavan or that *Br Ar Up* are the typical illustrations of cosmobiological hymns. Here the brahma is being compared with certain biological components like heart, ear, eye, etc. or biological phenomena like breathing, seeing, hearing, etc. How did these naive concepts come into being? We know that the primitive men even in the pristine antiquity noted the relation between the heavenly bodies with events on the earth. For example, the moon induces tides or seasonal variations coincide with the variations in the position of the heavenly bodies. These observations set into motion a series of ideas which culminated in the concept of correspondence between micro- and macrocosm. To quote Singer:

"The hylozoism of the Linnaeus, the doctrine the universe itself and the matter of which it is composed is living, gave a suggestive outline to the hypothesis of the parallelism of the outer universe and inner universe. But the main details on which the hypothesis was based were drawn from Aristotle..." (*From Magic to Science*, p 82).

This is not only peculiar to the Greeks but this trend was prevalent among other primitive peoples also.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the attempts to draw parallelism between brahma and the different components of the universe as reflected in the various cosmobiological, cosmometeorological and cosmoterrestrial hymns are nothing but the extension of this postulate of sympathetic linking of micro- and macrocosm.

In fact, the origin of many of the philosophical concepts can be traced from the original pre- or proto-philosophical concepts. In India, it is rather difficult, because in ancient India, as pointed out by A. K. Warder in his book, *Outline of Indian Philosophy*, "before philosophy can really be distinguished as an independent subject of study, science itself was hardly distinguishable from religion" (p 3).

This peculiar blending is a specific feature of Indian philosophy. So in order to understand the problem, one should try to trace the path of evolution of Indian philosophy from mythology, and analyse the material base which imparts these peculiar characteristics. Time and space do not permit us to deal with the subject exhaustively, but at the same without doing it, many of our formulations concerning Indian philosophy are likely to be erroneous. Anyhow we adjourn this discussion for some future date.

Bani Deshpande's mistake lies in his failure to take into consideration this reality of Indian philosophy.

Now a few words about rishis with intuition and contemplative faculties which Dange spoke yesterday. Who were these rishis? Deshpande mentions the name of Pythogoras. According to Burnet and others, Pythogoras was a medicineman. Time and space again do not allow us to go into details of the subject. One thing is very clear that some of the early rishis fall into the category of medicineman, shaman or sorcerer. For example, Rishi Chatan who was the author of many vedic hymns was a sorcerer. Chatan means sorcerer. Similarly, Garutman is connected with those vedic hymns which deal with treatment of poison. If we trace the genealogy of some of the rishis, we

shall find that they belong to the clan of Angirasa. Who is this Angirasa? According to Dr Satyaprakash, Angirasa was a firechurner, while Bloomfield describes him as the practitioner of black magic.

Now a little about contemplation. While contesting Dange, Mohit Sen yesterday said that the contemplation was reflection. It is correct so far modern philosophy and psychology are concerned. But this term has also anthropological meaning. In certain primitive tribes, before achieving the status of shaman, medicineman or sorcerer, a person is expected to go to a lonely place and sleep for a certain period. One is tempted to correlate this sleep of shaman with contemplation, meditation or dhyan of rishi.

"THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA": THE HALO AND THE HOLLOWNESS

G. J. RAMARAO

Wittingly or unwittingly, Bani Deshpande's *The Universe of Vedanta* is an attack on behalf of Hindu revivalism against dialectical materialism. The attack is veiled by the use of dialectical materialist laws and categories, described as "the perspective of dialectical materialism" (p 160).

S. A. Dange, however, discovers in the book three "*positive contributions*". And these are: (1) "dialectics, its foundation and character in vedanta ... and its concept of matter in dialectical motion"; (2) "new research in Indian philosophy, understanding of brahma, matter, space and time in their dialectical and integrated relationship... 'discovery' of materiality of time and other concepts", and (3) "the question of the role of 'creative intuition' ... in historical development" (*PL* XI-11, p 13). These claims merit scrutiny.

Bani's Method of Presentation

The vedanta philosophy presented in the book is a hotch-potch of yoga and vedanta [probably because of this mixture, Bani calls it "vedic philosophy in a number of places]. The eclectic mixture does not give a correct picture of either of them.

All the six schools of traditional philosophical thought in India have a common lore and technical terminology with specific meaning. Bani, however, gives them meanings of his own. To give only *one* example, the term *amritatva,* which means immortality, is supposed to mean "indestructibility" (p 125) and is defined as "worldly

wealth" (p 144)! Nevertheless, Bani denounces "idealists" (p 17), "modern bourgeois western scholars and western-oriented Indian scholars" (p 18), for their "wrong understanding and incorrect translations of many .. basic Sanskrit words" (pp 21-22). The purpose of this tirade seems to be to give the reader the impression that his own translation is the only honest, correct, 'patriotic' one, and thus to make him accept his authority on meaning and interpretation. Besides, his highly selective quotation of mutilated Sanskrit texts is invariably coupled with a distorted interpretation of them. Again, to give *one* example, where Vyasa, the *Yogasutra* commentator, says *Trayam ca etad vastu jnanasya jneyam,* Bani leaves out the particle, 'trayam ca', meaning 'the three things', so as to be able to translate the word etad vastu as "everything in this universe"! (p 121).

This kind of presentation is larded with expressions like "the highly perfected, highly scientific dialectics of vedanta" and with cheap appeals to patriotism ad nauseam. For the consumption of Marxists, a liberal sprinkling of Marxist terminology is served, together with the denigrating theory that dialectical materialism was a dish cooked by vedanta several thousand years ago, and served stale in the 19th century by Marx and Engels.

Such is Bani's method. Let us turn to the substance.

Vedanta 'Dialectics'

Right at the beginning and elsewhere in the book (pp 20, 30, 52, 54), Bani makes it clear that for vedanta the "mechanical" distinction between materialism and idealism mean nothing—at least, "unless it is proved in its dialectical synthesis" (p 19). What matters to vedanta is dialectics, and, what matters to Bani is "the restoration of the dialectical foundation of the vedanta philosophy" (pp 52, 54). But strangely enough, vedanta has no names for its "dialectical" laws. It is Marxist-Leninist laws and categories that are made to hold together the vedantic notions. In other words, Bani effects a "dialectical synthe-

sis" between materialism and idealism, between Marxist terminology and vedanta-yoga content. This sums up *The Universe of Vedanta.*

Bani insists that "the basic authority of the shruti and smriti texts" should be "recognised" and "accepted" (p 21). Earlier it was pointed out that Bani implicitly wants us to accept his authority on the meaning and interpretation of texts. We have thus both the Bible and the Pope whose authority is to be accepted. This is the fundamental demand of *The Universe of Vedanta* and its 'dialectics'. This is contrary to what Engels points out, "... the revolutionary character of the Hegelian philosophy" is "that it once for all dealt the death blow to the finality of all products of human thought and action. Truth, the cognition of which is the business of philosophy, was in the hands of Hegel no longer an aggregate of finished dogmatic statements, which once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart. Truth lay now in the process of cognition itself, in the long historical development of science, which mounts from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge without ever reaching, by discovering socalled absolute truth, a point at which it can proceed no further, where it would have nothing more to do than to fold its hands and gaze with wonder at the absolute truth to which it had attained (this is what precisely intuition as conceived by Dange and Bani does)... For it (dialectical philosophy) nothing is final, absolute, sacred ... its revolutionary character is absolute—the only absolute dialectical philosophy admits" (SW III, pp 339-40). In short, the real dialectical philosophy accepts its revolutionary character as final and absolute while the sham dialectics of vedanta accepts as absolute the products of human thought, "shruti and smriti". Vedanta is, therefore, conservative, and devoid of *real* scientific dialectics.

Nevertheless Bani alleges that vedanta-yoga mixture has developed all the laws of dialectics. Let us verify his allegation.

The vedantins "were compelled to characterise their

brahma as nirguna or nonqualified" because otherwise "their brahma itself would have vanished from existence according to the laws of dialectical development... Hence ... the nirgunatva or nonqualification has to be regarded as the greatest feat of their intellectual flight..." (p 157). Obviously the vedantic dialectics could not see in "nirgunatva or nonqualification" its opposite. For "nonqualification" it itself a qualification which "their brahma" cannot escape and therefore has to "vanish"! This has not occurred even to Bani, the champion of vedanta dialectics!

The law of the opposites is the basic law of dialectics The opposites at once imply and exclude each other: they are inseparable, form a unity but struggle with each other. The unity is temporary and relative while the struggle is absolute, which is the "prime mover". But vedanta holds, in Sankaracharya's words, *evam karyasya karanadananyatvam,* i.e. thus the nonotherness of effect from the cause (*ananyatvam* is translated by Bani as "nondifference" and also as "indivisibility", p 70). For vedanta, cause and effect are not different and therefore the advaitis deny causality. This naturally implies no struggle, and therefore no change.

Bani discovers the dialectical law of the transformation of quantity into quality in *Yogasutra* 3-13 of Patanjali, which reads: *etena bhutendriyeshu dharmalakshanavastha parinama vyakhyatah.* Bani explains this as meaning "that in this way, the laws of dialectics, viz dharma-parinam or qualitative change, lakshana-parinam or quantitative change are applicable not only to the inorganic world (bhoot) but also to the whole of the organic world including all the processes of the human body and mind (indriya) (p 72). (Needless to say that the five *bhutas* and the ten or eleven indriyas do not cover the inorganic and organic "worlds". Vyasa here explains that because of the three modifications in the mind, viz of dharma, of lakshana and of avastha, there appear the same modifications in the bhutas and the indriyas. Vyasa's idealsm is selfevident). The fact is that the sutra talks of three (not two) modifi-

cations (Bani's "changes"), viz of dharma, of lakshana and of avastha, the last one of which Bani has totally left out! And lakshana means symptom, not "quantity". In any case the sutra does not say anything about quantity changing into quality, much less about revolutionary leaps!

A vedanta formulation is alleged to be the law of qualitative change. It is *guna guneshu vartante,* which actually means that the three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas, act among themselves, but which according to Bani, means "the evolution of one property (the philosophical term guna does not mean "property" in general but three specific gunas, namely, satva, rajas and tamas) from the other is the law of the universe" (p 70). Even then the formulation does not say anything like quantity changing into quality.

"Every new stage arises by negating the previous stage by the law of negation of negation ... and the development takes place from lower to the higher plane ... from past to the present and from present to future" (p 113). This means that the process of sublation is implicit in the negation of negation. Sublation at once means destruction (of the dead and useless) and preservation (of the living and positive). Bani discovers the law of the negation of negation both in advaita and in yoga. An aphorism from the *Brahma-Sutras* says: *Uttarotpade ca purvanirodhat.* This according to Bani, means that "every new stage arises by negating the previous stage" (p 113). But the sutra says something else. It says that with the emergence of a subsequent, the antecedent is blocked, *annihilated.* Thus, it refutes the vaiseshika, and the buddhist theories of causality. We find a similar idea in the quotations from Vyasa's *Yogasutra.* In Bani's own 'transpretation' (my own coinage: translation+interpretation; this is not to say that Bani has done it correctly but it will do for our present argument) Vyasa maintains that "the present stage which is negated into the past ceases to exist and cannot be said to possess the previous and later characteristics of development" (p 114). Vyasa does not talk of "stages"; he

mentions, simply, past, present and future. But the important point is that neither the *Brahma Sutra* of Badarayana nor the *Yoga Sutra Bhashya* of Vyasa deals with the negation of negation. Even if they were *construed* as the law of the negation of negation, this law is without sublation, and therefore without continuity on a "higher plane".

In sum, yoga, "the highest culmination of the dialectical school" of vedanta (p 25) and "the dialectical philosophy of vedanta" (p 41), is devoid of dialectics!

Let us briefly note two features of Bani's discussion on dialectics. Firstly, in the very few places that Bani mentions the law of the opposites, he only talks of their unity but not struggle (pp 88, 109). In other places he does not even mention the law of the opposites (pp 71, 77).

Secondly, Bani's own outlook is unmistakably idealist. He approves Lincoln Barnett's statement that "there is no such thing as colour without an eye to discern it..." (p 103), which means that the objective reality (colour) is a product of the subject (an eye). The same idealist outlook is evident when, once again, Bani quotes Barnett in agreement: "In the words of Barnett, 'In man's brief tenancy on earth, he egocentrically orders events in his mind according to his own feelings of past, present and future. But except on the reels of one's own consciousness, the universe, the objective world of reality, does not 'happen' ... (pp 107-8). Here we find subjective idealism verging on solipsism comparable to the advaita dictum *aham brahmasmi,* I am brahman. Bani's idealism goes to the extent of agreeing with Vyasa that 'neither time nor space exists in the process of the development of matter" (p 105). In full agreement with "the vedanta outlook [which] teaches to visualise the objective world, by perceiving it in the dissolution of the subjective distinction of time and space" (p iii), Bani declares that Einstein was wrong because "In Einstein's definition, the subjective and unscientific concept of space and time does not dissolve ..." (p iii). It is this subjective idealism that is responsible for Bani's distortion of Lenin's definition of mat-

ter. Bani writes, "Lenin declared that the knowledge of objective reality given to man by his sensations ... copied and photographed on the mind is the philosophical category of matter existing independently" (p 75). Lenin does not say that "the knowledge of objective reality" is "the philosophical category of matter existing independently". Lenin says, "Matter is a philosophical category, denoting the objective reality, which is given to man by his sensations, and which is copied, photographed and reflected by our sensations, while existing independently of them." Finally, for Bani, it is not matter in motion, motion in matter, the dialectical unity and struggle in matter and motion (reflected in the thinking brain as dialectical materialist philosophy) that is the source or cause of development. Bani maintains that "the laws of dialectics, the negation of negation, quantitative and qualitative change, are the prime movers, the cause of the eternal existence and continuity from eternity to infinity" (p 77). It is the laws, the mental reflections that are "the prime movers" of matter, "the cause" of "its development, nature and its forces in every form" (p 77). Such is Bani's "perspective of dialectical materialism" (p 160), which is neither dialectical nor materialist but thoroughly idealist.

Matter and the Brahman

Let us now investigate into the vedantic conception of matter.

"Vedic philosophers", Bani says, "propounded that matter is eternal because *katham asatah sajjayate*, what is real or existing can never be born out of unreal or nonexistent" (pp 66-67). It seems that this is not the only view on the subject; for, Bani adds, "...matter can exist only in the unity of the opposites, in a dialectical unity and hence it is described in vedanta as sat and asat, real and unreal, existing and nonexisting at the same time. This is the ultimate and highest scientific formulation modern science can be proud of" (p 109). Bani does not explain how

matter can be "nonexisting"! Yet, he tells what "modern science can be proud of"!

The sankhyas, we are told, conceived matter "as the pradhan or chief principle" and "held that in the beginning ... it lay" with "three qualities ... satva, raja and tama ..." (p 677). Thus, matter has a "beginning"!

As a result of interaction among the gunas (guna guneshu vartante), matter "developed into two branches, i.e. organic or sendriya and inorganic or nirindriya". In "this way they evolved in all 25 basic elements inclusive of sound, smell, taste, sensation, light, mind, thinking and consciousness or mana" which is "jada or material" (p 68). Obviously these 25 elements are products of the sankhya thought. And they grouped even the sensations and consciousness under "elements", without drawing any distinction between objective reality and subjective reflection. Even mind is conceived as "material" obliterating the distinction between mind and matter!

The vedantins "called this universe by the name of brahma, meaning something that is in perpetual motion, growing and developing" (p 84). "In answer to the question, how motion is created in matter, they replied: *Bahu syam prajayeyeti,* meaning it thought itself and decided that it should manifest or grow into multitudinous forms. They called it self-moving and thus it began to move" (p 85). Thus, brahma, "this universe", material reality, 'thinks' and has a will of its own! To put it differently and plainly, brahma is god, a thinking and willing god!

The "brahma or the universe is resting on four feet... known as prakashvan ('space'), anantavan ('infinity in terms of time'), jyotishman ('motion') and ayatanavan ('a definite place')" (p 86). "It is self-evident ... that the concept of space, time, motion and a definite place are not only symbolised to have material existence but they are also shown as closely interconnected..." (p 87). Thus, "brahma has a definite place". Obviously it is not matter or material reality which is boundless and *exists* everywhere. And *the concept* (of time, space etc.), it seems, has

material existence. In other words, there it is no distinction between *material reality* and *the concept* that reflects it. In short, the brahman is the god! Yet, Bani maintains that all this is "materiality" of the brahman. And Dange, like Bani, without drawing any distinction between *material reality* and *the concept* denoting it, describes "the concept of brahma" as "a cognisable material reality" (p 9). Compare this view with Dange's earlier view of the brahman: "...*brahman* of the *vedic* Aryan is quite different from the *brahman* of the upanishadic philosophers. The *vedic* barbarian ... was far away from developing the idealist philosophy and cant of the later *upanishadic* period. There the brahman is the original intelligence, consciousness or spirit whose manifestation is the world. The *brahman* is without qualities (*nirguna*) while the vedic one is objectively real, with qualities (saguna)..." (*India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*, p 48). It goes on. And Dange sticks to this view even in the latest edition of his book. But, in Bani's book, he makes a right about turn!

Bani goes on, "While not describing the existence of object in terms of its dimensions, they nevertheless correctly described the existence of everything in its materiality in the brahma in the oblong form of an object..." (p 87). Material objects thus have only one dimension, length and no breadth and height. And this, Bani says, is a "correct" description!

"... and their brahma itself" is "closer and farther... is moving and static at the same time" (p 87). How 'dialectical'! But can "the universe" ever be "static"? The question does not arise for Bani.

Bani eulogises, "Having described thus, they crowned it with the most brilliant definition: *Anoraniyan mahato mahiyan*, which means that it is smaller than the smallest 'anu' or atom and bigger than the biggest" (pp 87-88). What a "crowning" and a half! Brahma, "this universe", also material reality, is "smaller than the smallest 'anu' or atom and bigger than the biggest"—what? Surely, the object indicated by the description is something else? Yes, it is. It is

our good old atman, the soul-stuff! So says *Kathopanishad*, the source of this description. Presently Bani will confirm us.

Bani claims that the vedantins "had split the 'anu' or atom in their imagination into a *parama*-form of matter..." (p 91). Sorry! Simply, "...they split the atom and refuted the atomistic theory ... the Greek philosophers ... were unable to refute the atomistic theory as scientifically as it was done in India" (p 92). Bani continues, "Having prepared the groundwork for a methodic approach, they reduced the elements (25 in number) to particles and then to forces and in the final analysis reduced everything to energy in its essentially eternal and active form which they ... expressed in the word chaitanya" (p 137). Matter is, thus, reduced to "eternal" chaitanya in the laboratory of the mind; it is no longer matter now but the eternal *chaitanya* (chaitanya means consciousness and not energy, "eternal" or otherwise), energy, defined in vedanta lore as the spirit or, alternately, the *atman!*

Naturally, Bani declares, "Since this essence was manifesting itself into everything that exists, they described that every living or nonliving thing, every force and phenomenon must contain a part of that infinite chaitanya of the brahma. This little, infinitesimal, invisible part ... was named by them as the essence, the soul, the atma of everything that existed. Thus we see how a new category, *not yet unscientific*, came into existence" (p 140). So, at last, we have met our long lost friend, the atman, the soul-stuff, that has no material attributes, no materiality! "*not yet unscientific*"—indeed? That is Bani's science!

Bani writes, "Hence in the vedanta philosophy, the brahma is always described and expressed as *chaitanyamaya brahma* meaning the brahma is full of chaitanya" (p 140). Thus materiality turns into its 'dialectical' opposite, immateriality!

Let us now look at the unity of the vedantic brahman. "The vedic thinkers .. defining ... that the universe is

a single whole, described it most scientifically and beautifully as *ekameva advitiyam*" (p 132). It means, "Only one without a second". "...what remained for (the vedantins) was nothing but the true, indestructible, physical reality, which they described as *sarvam khalu idam brahma.* All this truly is the universe" (pp 124-25). Thus the unity of the universe is established in two phrases, "scientifically and beautifully"! For the vedantins and Bani, aphoristic phrases about "brahma" are science and art. But for dialectical materialism, the material unity of the universe is not a matter or verbal formulation but something that was and is to be proved and confirmed in all its manifestations by science and social practice. But, of course, Bani is talking here not about material but about "physical" reality, probably the body of the brahman!

Bani enlightens us, "While describing the universe, like Einstein they called it *digdesakalabheda sunyam brahma.* The sutra means that the brahma ... is something which is comprehensible or knowable only by conceiving it in the total dissolution of the distinction (bhedasunyam) of space (digdesh) and time (kal)" (p 110). "... the definition... is more correct, appropriate and meaningful than even the ...space-time-continuum" of Einstein (p 111). Since the sutra does not talk about knowability, we are forced to ignore Bani's put-on construction in favour of a correct translation, which is "Brahma is devoid of the distinction or difference of direction, place and time". This or even Bani's rendering does not bear any semblance to Einstein's theory. Yet it is "more correct" for Bani. In any case, the brahman is devoid of the distinctions mentioned above. But material reality is not. Therefore, the brahman is made of different stuff; it is the eternal, immortal substance formulated in "*brahmaivedamamrtam* meaning that all that you see is the indestructible universe" (p 125). The mutilated line actually means that all "this [is] verily the immortal brahman". It is immortality not 'indestructibility" that is attributed to the brahman. Immortality is associated with heaven and divinity.

Although the good fellow, brahman, has all these attributes mentioned above, "the vedanta philosophers...declared that the chaitanya or the chaitanyamaya brahma was incomprehensible for them and qualified it as achintya meaning which could not be thought of"! (p 138). "...since it could not be seen, known or felt by anyone, since it was incomprehensible to human intelligence...they found that it could only be expressed negatively" as "formless or nirakar", "nonqualified or nirguna" etc. (nirgunatva does not mean "nonqualification" or "attributelessness", it means the absence of the three *gunas* which afflict the mind and not the brahman, which is beyond the three *gunas*). "Hence it was established as nirguna, nirvikar, nirakar, etc". "...amrit, avinashi, avyaya", etc. (p 139), "ananta and anadi" etc. (p 140). In spite of all these qualities, the brahman is stil nirguna! Yet the brahman resides in everything and everyone in the form of "the invisible" atman. Hence the famous vedanta doctrine *aham brahmasmi* (I am brahma)—the logical expression of godhead's solipsist subjective idealism manifesting itself in 'the part' which declares itself to be 'the whole'. What is more, the brahman, which we were told earlier was knowable, has now 'dialectically' transformed itself into "the incomprehensible". Such an "incomprehensible" brahman is verily 'discriminative knowledge and bliss" (*vijnanam anandam brahma*) because the egoistic soul called 'I' can wallow in the "bliss" of its own knowledge as nothing but the brahman and attain "selfrealisation". Thus the splendour of divinity, the lord almighty, called the brahman manifests itself in all the qualities including the ego-soul. None of them, however, is a quality of *objective reality, of materiality!*

We have seen how the vedantic brahman rests on four feet, two of which are space and time. Dialectical materialists view space and time as forms of the existence of matter, and therefore as part of objective reality independent of the mind. To repeat, space and time are independent of *the mind.* They are inextricably connected with and modified by matter in motion and motion in matter. And, how

does the yoga philosophy view these two categories? Let Bani tell us.

"Vyasa says ... that there is nothing like the entity of time existing independently in the world except in the imagination of man... He further explains...that although time does not exist independently like a thing or an object, but it only exists in the imagination of man" (p 93). Actually, Vyasa's comment (for which this is Bani's transpretation) is *kalo vastu sunyo buddhi nirmanah* (p 93) which means that time being devoid of material objects is a mental construct (*budhinirmanah*). Time, for yoga, is a mental construct, or to quote Bani, it "exists in the imagination of man". It is a product of the mind and has nothing to do with material objects or matter. It is not independent of the mind.

As Bani puts it, according to Vyasa, "neither time nor space exists in the process of the development of matter" (p 105). That is why they defined the brahman as *digdesa kala bheda sunyam brahma*, devoid of the distinction of direction, place and time (p 110). But Bani holds, "In my opinion, the definition ... is more correct than even Einstein's" (p 111). Why?—we may ask. Bani says, "because the vedic definition carries more clearer the scientific concept of physical(?) reality... In Einstein's definition (of space-time-continuum)), the subjective and unscientific concept of space and time does not dissolve into establishing the truth of physical reality" (p 111). Einstein's space-time-continuum does not undergo dissolution and, consequently, it is "subjective and unscientific"! But, because the vedanta space and time "dissolve" and moreover because they are two feet of the brahman, and also because time is a product of the mind as per Vyasa, in Bani's opinion, the vedantic concept is objective and scientific! For Bani, the objective reality with its space-time dimensions existing independently of the mind is a subjective notion while the "incomprehensible" brahman, "the universe" existing "attributeless" in the "dissolution of space-time", in the atman, is objective, "more correct and scientific". Verily,

sense becomes nonsense and vice versa in Bani's *The Universe of Vedanta!*

As pointed out earlier, materialist dialectics holds that objective reality is knowable through science and social practice, which by changing the objective reality facilitate our comprehension of it. But Bani alleges that "... Marx and Engels expressed that scientific pursuit of this incomprehensible universe is the *real* and the highest pleasure in life" (p 153). Did Marx and Engels say that? No one else can accuse Marx and Engels of any such nonsense. However how does one pursue "the incomprehensible"? Bani obviously does!

Bani tells us that the "vedic philosophers" reduced everything to energy called chaitanya (p 137). They had discovered that "electricity was an energy" and "we have proofs that they could also create it" (p 130). "Create", please note, not produce. And then they used it in "medical [?] treatment ... they developed what is called the mantravidya or the science of mantras which was nothing according to them but electrotherapy" (p 130). And Bani assures us that "There is nothing mystical or unscientific in their understanding" (p 130). It needs more than a straight face for anyone to be able to say so!

The "vedic thinkers" also "believed that *tena jeevepi brahmani vidyamana nikhila saktayah santyeva,* meaning every power that exists with the brahma or nature also exists in a dormant form in man" (p 132). Bani asks: "What more confidence can a man of science require today...?" (p 132). When the atman residing in the jeeva is the brahman, it has "all the powers" of the brahman. So man equals matter or god whichever you prefer!

The atman is the substratum of everything, living and nonliving alike (p 140). The atman in its ego-soul (or the "I") form is the brahman. Logically, to be sure, the vedantins "declared *neha nanasti kincana,* meaning that essentially and in its ultimate analysis, there is no difference in anything that exists in this universe" (p 141). "This understanding ... brought about another revolution in

their culture and outlook" which "established that all men are equal being part of the same chaitanyamaya brahma... universal brotherhood." (pp 141-42). The implication obviously is that there is no difference between the exploiter and the exploited, between the rich and the poor, between the oppressor and the oppressed because all share the brahman in the shape of the atman and share the brahman's "powers" as well!

Although the brahman resides in everything, living and nonliving, these two categories, surprisingly, are not equal. Even among the living, it is only men that are all equal. And men, if they are to be equal, have to give up "the culture prevailing in the animal world", to wit, killing and eating other animals. "Nonvegetarianism still left the man in the animal kingdom..." So, men have to be vegetarians in order to be equals, because vegetarianism is "the high principle of humanism on a broader plane" (p 142). Thus not all atmans are equal; some are more equal than others! The test is vegetarianism. Nonvegetarians are inferior equals, mere animals. By this criterion, Hitler, the pure Aryan, ought to be declared humane because he was a vegetarian! After all this tedium, the inescapable conclusion is that the brahman is not matter, is not material, but is timeless, spaceless, incomprehensible, etherial entity which discriminates between men on the pious basis of vegetarianism.

Vedanta-Yoga and the Theory of Knowledge

Materialist dialectics includes the theory of knowledge. Unless Bani shows the theory of knowledge in the vedanta-yoga philosophy, he cannot firmly establish its versatile superiority. So Bani regales us with the vedanta-yoga theory of knowledge.

Isn't this rather strange? We have already seen in Bani's own words that there is nothing more to know.

The objective reality, the brahman, "the universe", is nirakar, nirvikar, nirguna and finally, achintya or incomprehensible. The atman which resides in the "jeeva" is the

brahman and shares all these qualities, "powers". Moreover the brahman exists only in "the dissolution of space and time". What else is there to know? In any case, how does one know "the incomprehensible"? Obviously, "the incomprehensible" generates its 'dialectical' opposite "the comprehensible".

"Hence discussing the scientific laws of dialectics, Vyasa tells us, unlike many modern scientists, *etadvastu jnanasya jneyam*, meaning that everything in this universe .. is knowable ... to man's intelligence (jnanam)" (p 121). Not only Vyasa but Marx also said it—so Bani says (p 154). But what did Vyasa actually say? He said *trayam ca etadvastu jnanasya jneyam*, meaning that these three things, namely, past, present and future are the knowable, i.e. the subject matter of jnana. Vyasa thus did not mean "everything" but three specific things, past, present and future. And jnana does not mean "intelligence" as Bani says. On this, we have Patanjali's own definition quoted by Bani. The definition reads *kshanat kramayoh samyamat vivekajam jnanam*) (p 121). Bani does not explain this sutra. What it says is that jnana is the product of discriminatory wisdom (viveka) obtained by practising samyama on the kshanas and their sequence. Samyama is a technical term in yoga for fixation, meditation and concentration of the mind on one and the same thing, in this case, on kshanas and their sequence or krama. To paraphrase: past, present and future are the subject-matter of jnana which is the product of discriminatory wisdom which is the result of intense concentration on kshanas and their order. In short, jnana is a product of the mind and not of science and social practice. Bani adds that this jnana "was also called the brahma-vidya" (p 122). So let us make a transition to vedantic view of knowledge.

Bani informs us: "One of the fundamental tenets of vedanta philosophy is that knowledge cannot be separated from karma or practice. Karma only means practice which is social in character" (pp 143-44). Karma in Indian philosophy, however, has a different meaning. It means

performance of rites and rituals or, alternately, the result or product of such rites performed by an individual. The performance of rites and ceremonies is also known as avidya while a theoretical knowledge of the rites to be performed is called vidya.

Having noted this, let us proceed:

Andham tamah pravisanti ye avidyam upasate
Tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u vidyayam ratah.

According to Bani, "This great ancient shloka states that those who believe in practice .. enter into darkness. Those who believe only in knowledge ... enter into greater darkness" (p 144). We have to add that Bani in his explanation has distorted the meanings of the two technical terms vidya and avidya. What the sloka actually means is that those who practise rites and ceremonies enter into darkness while those who delight in the theoretical knowledge of the rites and ceremonies enter into yet greater darkness.

The author of the sloka also notes that he had heard that by vidya and avidya, two completely different results are obtained and states what he had heard:

Vidyam ca avidyam ca yastadvedobhayam saha
Avidyaya mrtyum teertva vidyaya amrtam asrute.

Bani's gloss on this sloka is that "those who understand that knowledge and practice are inseparable, succeed in life and obtain immortality or amrutatvam. What is immortality? It is clearly stated that immortality means worldly wealth" (p 144). We must admire Bani, he is ingenious and can twist anything into anything else without so much as batting an eyelid. Immortality is "success in life" or "worldly wealth"! But—the sloka does not talk of "inseparability" of knowledge and practice. On the contrary, it says that [it is said that] he who knows both vidya and avidya together (i.e. who has theoretical knowledge of the rites and also practises them), overcoming death by avidya, attains, by vidya, the nature of immortals (or immortality), i.e. goes to heaven with all its delights. Thus, in all this,

there is nothing like what materialist dialectics understands by knowledge and social practice. The whole theory concerns the knowledge and practice of rites and ceremonies. This revivalist ritualism is paraded as the theory of knowledge!

Intuition, Idealist and Materialist

The brahman is 'incomprehensible". The theory of knowledge does not help knowing "the incomprehensive". What is to be done, then? Dange provides the answer: "*Intuition* itself as an instrument to superior knowledge, is a condition of matter in its process of thinking to which the human body can be conditioned" (p 14). Intuition is the answer, not science nor social practice.

First of all, please understand Dange's formulation correctly. Intuition is "an instrument". The human "body" can be conditioned to this "instrument". That is, intuition, "the instrument", becomes a *physiological* function, not a psychic phenomenon. Further, intuition is a condition of "matter" not of the mind "in its process of thinking". It is an instrument to "superior" knowledge, the "superiority" remaining undefined. In other words, intuition arises when matter thinks and the body, which after all is matter, can be conditioned to it so as to enable it to attain "superior" knowledge! All this may be anything but science and dialectical materialism. In any case, we are concerned more with Bani's view of intuition, which incidentally figures not in the body of the book but in its preface.

Bani says, "In vedanta philosophy this phenomenon [intuition] is clearly developed and explained as a material phenomenon" (p 44). As with Dange, so with Bani: intuition is a "material phenomenon". Bani adds, "I have proved it as the highest perfection of vedic dialectics known as brahma-vidya or the science of 'the greatest and highest knowledge' " (pp 44-45). Intuition is "brahma vidya", also "knowledge" and yet a "material phenomenon"!

"... intuition", says Bani, "is neither a stage nor a state of evolution as imagined by Volkov ... but it is only a

momentary phenomenon" (pp 45-46). "...Intuition without knowledge is senseless. In other words intuition based on knowledge alone can create the genius like Marx, Einstein, Lenin" (p 47). Funny, isn't it?—that intuition can "create" the genius. We'll ignore this. Bani has made two points: one, that intuition is "a momentary phenomenon" and two, that intuition without knowledge is "senseless". Very well. Now, listen to what he says: "At the same time it does not mean that intuition does not arise without knowledge" (p 47). That is an example of Bani's dialectics!

Bani contradicts Dange by saying "intuition is not just a means to superior knowledge. Such knowledge arises in the earlier stages of intuition" (p 48). So now, intuition is no longer "a momentary phenomenon" as Bani said earlier. It has "stages", divided into "the earlier" and "the higher"! "The earlier ones" are a means to mere "superior knowledge". "But in the higher stages many faculties develop in the sensory organs and our body which are lying dormant" (p 48). As with Dange, so with Bani, "the higher stages" of intuition are connected with "the sensory organs and the body", with the physiological system. Bani warns, "Once the phenomenon of intuition is understood, modern science will be struck with horror to face many inexplicable mysteries of our universe, of human body, its structure and function" (p 48). As Bani says, "Patanjali has explained" how the "many faculties" "lying dormant can be aroused and developed. The "faculties", the "superior knowledge", are, in fact, the supernatural powers listed in the third chapter of the *Yoga Sutra* and the second chapter deals with the methods to arouse these powers, which include the power to enter into another's body! As Bani declares, "intuition is also a phenomenon which enables many people to exactly foretell and foresee things which are beyond normal sensory capacities of human organism or beyond even the most sophisticated instruments" (p 48). Thus yoga is the science of intuition which consists in conditioning the body and the sensory organs to attain supernatural powers. In short, yoga is plain occult-

ism, a form of obscurantism, a constituent of subjective idealism of Indian mysticism.

That is precisely why it is *esoteric* and *elitist*. In Bani's words, "yoga has to be taught to *only* those who have learnt *all* the sciences of the world" (p 46, emphasis added). "Hence it was stated that the teacher should select from his pupils and the father should teach his elder son who were worthy of learning the science of yoga" (p 47).

To be fair to Bani and Volkov, whose name was needlessly dragged in, we must examine what Volkov says about intuition. "Intuition", writes G. Volkov in *Men and the Challenge of Technology*, "is the wings of thought, making it possible to break the wall of concepts which have become conventional and have acquired the character of prejudices" (p 191). Obviously, it is a psychic or mental phenomenon, in the nature of a qualitative leap, as it were, in man's (not matter's) thinking process. It has a critical-revolutionary character. As such, there is no question of accepting the authority of "shruti and smriti" or "the science" of yoga.

Volkov writes. "This 'mechanism' (of the display of intuition) can only be understood through an analysis of social practice (not through yoga or vedanta!). In this practice man at first encounters some part of a phenomenon having a general nature, encounters an element included in a system of definite relations. He does not yet know this general nature; he does not as yet understand the action of the entire system—it has not been precisely reflected in conceptions. Neverthless, on the basis of previous experience man surmises that this is not an isolated phenomenon. He does not realise this so much as he senses a need to include it in a more general system, make it a part of some still unknown whole. And a hypothetical image of the whole takes shape in his mind...

"Intuition can be defined as the ability to foresee the whole before all parts of this whole are forthcoming, as the ability to grasp in the imagination the very essence of relations before these relations are investigated. Intuition

in science is a distinctive, prelogical form of hypothetical thinking which precedes the generically theoretical hypothesis and logical thinking" (Volkov, p 193).

Thus the source of intuition is some part or aspect of objective reality encountered in social practice—not the *Yoga-Sutra* or the body and the sensory organs. Man's mind, with the help of his imaginative faculty and previous experience, tries to reflect this part or aspect of objective reality in its interconnection with a general system, a whole yet to be discovered and *senses* the whole. This sensing (not forecasting the future) is what is called intuition. It is a prelogical form of hypothetical thinking which needs to be formulated theoretically, logically and to be tested in practice, whereby it becomes *universal* knowledge (with no esoteric or elitist prescriptions).

Although intuition is a form of imagination, not every sensing of an imaginary hypothetical whole is intuition. Intuition must be validated by verification (Volkov, p 194). Further, "The intuitive image of the whole which appears in the mind is formed according to certain laws, viz the laws of harmony, beauty and inner logic; it is formed in accordance with the aesthetic and philosophical conceptions of the world which the scientist (or artist) gradually acquires during his whole life and which (are) formed during his practical and theoretical work" (Volkov, p 194). Intuition is thus possible in any branch of social practice, art or science, and is possible for even those who have not mastered "all" the sciences of the world. It does not "create" the genius. Rather, it is a quality of the genius. The genius acquires this quality during his whole life-time's theoretical and practical activity guided by past experience.

Moreover, as Volkov once again reminds, "Man's practice, repeated millions of times (through centuries), consolidates in social consciousness not only the formal logic of operations in the form of syllogisms but also the inner logic of the structure of things, the dialectics of their

interconnections, appearing externally, sensually, in the form of beauty of things, their aesthetic character ... while forming matter according to the laws of beauty, man also formed his ability to think according to the laws of beauty, and grasp, through phantasy, the whole before its parts, creating in the imagination not an arbitrary whole but one expressing the laws of the object... Like every other human faculty, intuition is not entirely inborn, but may be aroused, developed and enhanced primarily by *training and developing the more general faculty of phantasy, the play of imagination*" (not through occult practices of yoga) (Volkov, pp 195-96, emphasis added). As is clear, the content of intuition is the object and its laws and not, as with Dange and Bani, the supernormal powers of the body and the sensory organs, which allegedly transcend the limitations of historical social development and social practice.

Volkov does not say, as Bani alleges, that under the world communist system in some distant future, "all men will begin to live and think in intuition" (p 45). After describing the nature of contemporary art and science, Volkov modestly writes, "Today one can only make guesses about (the shape of thinking of the 21st century Einsteins). Nevertheless, ... the contraposition of art to science will ... be eliminated .. To man will be left the untrodden paths of cognition... In science as in art *the natural and generally accepted mode of expressing ideas will be marked* by intuitively grasped harmony, the free flight of inspiration and the inimitable charm of figurative, witty and beautiful, but at the same time, perhaps, not entirely logical and grammatically precise, living human thought" (Volkov, pp 200-1, emphasis added). Intuition thus supplements "the natural and generally accepted mode of expressing ideas".

Volkov who bases himself on science and objective reality and its laws is denounced as an "idealist and mystic" philosopher and the ideas he presented as "crass idealism" (p 45). In contrast, Bani describes the occultism of yoga

as highly scientific. Once again with him sense becomes nonsense and vice versa.

Bani's History and World-outlook

We have so far dealt with Bani's three "positive contributions" listed by Dange and found them to be baseless and hollow claims made on the basis of distortion and misinterpretation of yoga, vedanta and Volkov to denigrate Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

Let us also have a look at Bani's historical and world outlook.

We have already witnessed that for Bani vegetarianism distinguishes human beings from animals and that non-vegetarian human beings are animals (p 142). But, as far as Indians are concerned, they are not yet human. As Bani says, "once the lightning of a correct thought has squarely struck the ingenuous soil of the Indian people, the emancipation of *Indians* into *men* will be accomplished" (p 160). The "correct thought" in question is obviously the vedanta philosophy. For, as he says, "Vedanta philosophy was like a lion, the king, at the sight of which the jackals of every school of philosophy take to their heels" (p 155). No doubt, by implication, the "jackal" of Marxist-Leninist philosophy also faces the same fate! So Bani urges "all the Indians of different shades of opinion (should) try to understand the rich heritage of their culture and civilisation and *unite* to lead the world" (p 155). In other words, "all the Indians" should "unite", irrespective of class considerations, on the basis of vedanta, and not Marxism-Leninism, so that they could establish their Indian hegemony on the nations of the world and "lead the world". Bani even goes to the extent of appealing to the prime minister "to do full justice to this cause" (p 58). This chauvinism, comparable to Hitler's Aryan-German version, finds its expression in his view of history.

As he himself acknowledges, Bani's source-books on history are mainly Dange's *India* and Tilak's *Geeta*

Rahasya, with a sprinkling of Rajwade and Savarkar. Uncritically accepting the unscientific and unhistorical views such as yagna and varna modes of production, the yuga periodisation of history coupled with irrational chronology, Bani equates the beginning of Indian history with the composition of the Rigveda and pushes back the Rigveda to "about 10,000 years or more" ago "as many Indian historians correctly tend to think" (p 37). Following, perhaps, the dubious commonplace wisdom that old is gold, he tries to establish the greatness of Indian culture by its antiquity. Hence he assigns the Mahabharat war to 5000 years ago (p 32), and the *Brahma Sutras* to 1500 BC (p 92), and, so on. But Dange in his foreword says: "The Mahabharat war itself, which took place at about 3000 BC ... I may also put on record ... that the fall and decadence of the civilisations of Mohenjo-Daro and the Harappan line are due to ... Mahabharat war" (p 5).

Needless to say that no Indian or foreign historian worth his salt would agree with Bani. On the basis of the astronomical events, the king-list and the dates of the rishis mentioned in the Rigveda and the cross-contacts between the Harappan and other cultures outside India, and on the basis of C-14 dating, the Harappan culture is assigned "a chronological span of 2516 (2373-2010) to 1911 BC" (*Puratsttva:* Bulletin of the Indian Archaeological Society: No 7, 1974, p 66). This is the oldest date assigned so far. The battle between the Aryans and the Harappans is assigned to c 1930 BC (ibid). As for the Mahabharat war, Prof Sankalia (ibid, p 49), after sifting the available dependable evidence, drily remarks that "neither the original estimate based on depth of the deposits and relative dating, as also the subsequent Carbon-14 dates from Hastinapura and other sites, proved the culture to be older than seventh-eighth century BC, at the most. Popular mind, even of the educated Indian, cannot imagine that the authors of the painted grey ware culture, whom the archaeologists associate with the Mahabharata heroes—the Pandavas, Kauravas and Sri Krishna

——should have lived only 2700 years ago, and not 5000 years ago." The *composition* of the Rigveda, excepting the tenth mandala which is later, is assigned to c 1000 BC and that of the Mahabharat to the early christian era. They were reduced to writing even much later. The composition of the *Yoga Sutras* and the *Brahma Sutras* likewise are assigned to between 200 BC and 300 AD.

Besides fantastic chronology, Bani also makes historically untrue statements to establish that India was superior in every way. He claims that "India had reached the zenith of its glory in *every* branch of knowledge long before the times of Buddha" (p 31); that "Indians could develop ... a high order of civilisation with the development of *all* the branches of *knowledge and industry* ... long before Buddha" (p 35, emphasis added).

Ignoring the fact that the Aryans were themselves outsiders who came from the west and pushed back a developed civilisation to the pastoral stage, he denounces, "Scythians, Huns, Moghuls and christians" (pp 32, 50, 159) etc., from the west, betraying even religious antagonism, communalism. He claims that Indians never crossed the borders except as peaceful missionaries, which is not true. Finally, of course, he gives vent even to Maharashtrian chauvinism (pp 32, 34).

Thus, *The Universe of Vedanta,* no matter how noble the author's intentions are such as fighting Datta Bal's anti-Marxist, antiworkingclass views (p 17), or making "Marxism easily acceptable or understandable", is steeped in subjective idealism, chauvinism and anti-Marxism. It provides an ideological weapon to the monopolies and the political reaction in the country in their fight against the advancing left and democratic forces. It divides the working people along religio-communal lines destroying class solidarity and proletarian internationalism, and tends thereby to weaken the Indian social and class struggles against the industrial and land monopolies and imperialism. Through the illusions about intuition, "self-realisation" and supernormal powers to be attained by

mantravidya, brahmavidya and yoga, it breeds solipsist idealism and promotes convenient adaptation of individuals to the existing social system, away from class struggle. For all these reasons, the views expressed in *The Universe of Vedanta* must be relentlessly fought. This uncompromising ideological struggle is a part of the general, all-round struggle of the left and democratic forces against the forces of reaction, chauvinism and obscurantism.

FURTHER NOTE ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

DEBIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA

In my previous review of the book (*Party Life*, XI, 6), because of consideration of space, I could not go into the details of textual criticism. However since the author gives the impression that he has after all found certain passages from the Indian philosophical literature which are indicative of a very advanced form of materialist dialectics, it is necessary to analyse at least those passages that he considers to be most important for the thesis and see what they actually imply as contrasted with what our author says they imply. For this purpose we begin with the main passages quoted by him from the *Yoga-sutra* and Vyasa's commentary on them, on which our author mainly relies.

Yoga-sutra of Patanjali and Vyasa's Commentary on It

From the entire *Yoga-sutra* our author quotes mainly four sutras (iii.13 quoted on p 72; iii.14 quoted on p 115; iii.52 quoted on pp 55 and 121; iv.33 quoted on p 128). Of these, two are considered decisive by him. They are iii.52 and iii.13. So we shall discuss these two in some details.

Referring to his fundamental thesis, he says: "This thesis is entirely based on one of the sutras or aphorisms of Patanjali, viz *Ksana-tatkramayoh samyamat-vivekajam jnanam* with the commentary of Vyasa on various sutras" (p 55).

This is *Yoga-sutra* iii.52. Unfortunately our author quotes it with some error (instead of *Ksanatatkramayoh* he quotes it as *Ksanatkramayoh*, which makes no sense)

and repeats the same error while requoting it (p 121), where he comments:

"... this sutra means that when one studies and understands the theory of the sequence of the material processes, i.e. the structure of the matter and its development (dialectical because Patanjali is here explaining the laws of dialectical development) then alone a person can obtain the *highest knowledge*".

But let us first see what this sutra means and how it is interpreted by Vyasa. In the sutra, Patanjali uses four technical terms: (1) *Ksana,* (2) *tat-krama,* (3) *samyama* and (4) *vivekaja jnana.* Retaining these technical terms, the sutra means: "From the samyama on ksana and tat-krama results vivekaja jnana."

Of these four technical terms, samyama and vivekaja jnana are defined by Patanjali himself in *Yoga-sutra* iii.4 and iii.54 respectively.

In *Yoga-sutra* iii.4, Patanjali defines samyama as "the fusion of the three" (*trayam-ekatra samyamah*). Vyasa explains that these three are (1) conception (dharana), (2) meditation (dhyana) and (3) such a complete absorption in the object of meditation as makes one lose the sense of everything including his subjectivity (samadhi, defined in *Yoga-sutra* iii.3 as *tadevarthamatra-nirbhasam svarupa-sunyam iva samdhih*).

Thus, in short, samyama is supposed to be a mental stage representing the fusion of conception, meditation and total absorption in the object contemplated upon.

In *Yoga-sutra* iii.54, Patanjali defines vivekaja jnana as *tarakam sarva-visayam sarvatha-visayam a-kramam ca iti tat vivekajam jnanam.* Thus it is supposed to be a form of knowledge having four characteristics: (1) born of one's own gift or untutored: *taraka,* (2) having everything as its object: *sarva-viyasa,* (3) comprehension of everything belonging to the past, future and present: *sarvatha-visaya* and (4) comprehension of everything as established on a solitary moment; hence such knowledge itself transcends succession or sequence: *a-krama.*

Thus, in short, vivekaja-jnana is supposed to be some kind of omniscience which results from samyama or the fusion of conception, meditation and total absorption in the object.

With these clarifications, we may now turn to *Yoga-sutra* iii.52 on the basis of which our author claims to build up his main thesis. The main purpose of the sutra is to specify the nature of the object of samyama—of conception, meditation and total absorption—which leads to omniscience called vivekaja jnana. According to the sutra, such objects are ksana and tat-krama, i.e. the moment and its succession. Thus the sutra means:

"As a result of meditative trance or samyama on moment (ksana) and 'its succession' (tat-krama), there arises omniscience (vivekaja-jnana)".

While explaining the sutra, the commentator naturally wants to clarify the meaning of the moment (ksana) and its sequence (tat-krama), because samyama or the meditative trance on these as well as vivekaja jnana or the resulting omniscience of such meditation are explained elsewhere in the *Yoga-sutra*. The whole of Vyasa's commentary on the sutra is in fact designed to explain the meaning of the moment (ksana) and its sequence (tat-krama), and while explaining these Vyasa has naturally to elucidate the concept of "time" from the standpoint of yoga. Only a portion of this commentary is split up by our author in smaller bits and quoted (pp 89-102). While explaining these bits, however, he comes out with quaint statements betraying his total lack of understanding of the things he has the ambition to discuss. Besides he stops quoting the commentary abruptly and leaves untouched the most vital points of Vyasa as explained in the latter half of the commentary.

We shall have to discuss all this in some details.

Vyasa opens his commentary with two alternative definitions of ksana or moment. Our author quotes both, without realising that they are two alternative definitions.

The first of these definitions—quoted by our author is:

yathapakarsaparyantam dravyam paramanurevam paramapakarsaparyantah kalah ksanah (p 89). It means, "Just as an atom is that to which a thing is ultimately reduced (by the process of splitting it up into smaller bits), so also the moment (ksana) is that to which time is ultimately reduced." In other words, just as the atom (paramanu) is the ultimate particle reached by splitting up a physical thing, so also is moment the smallest conceivable unit of time.

Before proceeding further, let us note how our author interprets this definition of the moment. He interprets it as: "if we divide an object ad-infinitum ... then the concept of the particle thus arrived at is called a paramanu. Similarly it is assumed that if time be so divided ad-infinitum, then the last interval of time is called a moment or kshana" (p 90).

The ignorance involved in the use of the words "divide ...ad-infinitum" and "divided ad-infinitum" needs at once to be noted. It is not only an ignorance of the simple meaning of ad infinitum but also of the basic theoretical controversy over the atomic hypothesis that we have in Indian philosophy.

"Ad infinitum" means "up to infinity", "for ever". If it is permissible to conceive that we can go on dividing a physical thing up to infinity or for ever, we shall have to surrender the concept of the atom itself. On the contrary, the concept of the atom is reached only by rejecting the possibility of dividing a thing ad infinitum, i.e. only by insisting that the process of the division of a physical thing has to stop at some stage, beyond which it is not permissible to conceive of any further division of the particles reached. As a matter of fact, the buddhist idealists (sunyavadins), in refutation of the atomic hypothesis, enthusiastically argue that the division of a thing continues ad infinitum and hence the very concept of the atom has to be abandoned as a fiction. According to them, we can never reach the ultimate particle or the paramanu, because howsoever small a particle is pointed to, it is theoretically divisible into still

smaller particles, and so on—the process of division continues ad infinitum. As against this, one of the main arguments of the defenders of atomism is that it is theoretically impermissible to conceive the process of dividing a thing up to infinity or that it is obligatory for us to admit that this process must come to a stop (visrama, literally "rest") at some specific stage, for otherwise we commit ourselves to the fallacy of equating the magnitude of a grain of oil seed with that of a mountain: on the admission of division ad infinitum of both, both will have to be conceived as made up of an infinite number of parts and hence of equal magnitude. Obviously, our author is unaware of all this.

But let us return to Vyasa's commentary on *Yoga-sutra* iii.52.

After giving the first definition of the moment as the smallest unit of time analogous to the atom—the smallest particle of a physical object—he gives us an alternative definition of ksana or moment. Our author quotes it on page 92 and in interpreting it comes out with the biggest howler of the book. Since the entire theme of the fifth chapter of the book is based on this howler, we have to examine it in some details.

As the alternative definition of ksana or moment, Vyasa says: *Yavata va samayena calitah paramanuh purvadesam jahyat-uttaradesam upadasampadyeta sa kalah ksanah.* Or, moment is that (bit of) time which is taken by a 'moving atom' (calitah paramanuh: an atom in motion) to leave its 'former position' (purva-desam) and reach its (immediately) 'subsequent position' (uttara-desam).

Our author fails to note that this is an alternative definition of moment, which is obvious from the use of the word *va*, literally "or". He considers this alternative definition of the moment as its further explanation as given by Vyasa. As he says, "Having thus defined a moment and an infinitesimal particle, Vyasa explains further what is meant by a moment" (p 92). With such an understanding of the position of Vyasa, he quotes what is actually offered by Vyasa

as only an alternative definition of the moment. We have just mentioned this definition and have seen what it really means. But our author chooses to render it as follows: "A moment is a time required to go around from the east to the west of an infinitesimal particle or paramanu of a substance or dravyam" (p 92).

It is honestly below the dignity of any serious student of Indian philosophy to argue with an author who is capable of interpretation like this. Since however the chairman of the Communist Party of India certifies that "Bani Deshpande's inquiry . . . is the first attempt to explain the scientific basis of yoga and the philosophy on which it was based" (p 15) and since moreover Bani Deshpande wants to build up his pompous thesis on "Relativity of Space and Time in Vedanta" (Ch V of the book) almost exclusively on the basis of this understanding of Vyasa's point, intellectual obligation to the party demands that we have to analyse even the elementary errors committed by our author in interpreting Vyasa's second definition of the moment.

First, Vyasa speaks of a moving atom or atom in motion —*calitah paramanuh*—and not of going around an atom, as our author likes to imagine. It is absolutely impossible to find any word in Vyasa's text to suggest even remotely any idea of circumambulating an atom.

Secondly, our author takes *purva-desam*—literally "the former position"—to mean the "east" of an atom; and he takes *uttara-desam*—literally "the latter position"—to mean the "west" of an atom! This is surely the limit. Even admitting that it is permissible to talk of the directional distinctions of an atom and even allowing that *purva-desam* of the text means the "east" of an atom, it beats one to understand how anybody with even the minimum knowledge of Sanskrit can go to the extent of imagining that uttara-desam of the text means the "west" of an atom, when the fact is that the word *uttara* —as indicative of direction—simply means the "north". The Sanskrit word for the "west" is *pascima* and not uttara. Can you have any discussion at all with one who imagines that

uttara means the "west"? But this does not mean that the whole thing would have been less ridiculous had our author spoken of going "around from the east to the north of an infinitesimal particle", for apart from the intrinsic difficulty of conceiving such a circumambulatory movement the plain fact is that Vyasa is speaking here of a moving atom leaving its "former position" and reaching its "latter position".

Thirdly, the quaint process of circumambulating or going around an atom imagined by our author demands that he should further imagine somebody or something else that moves around the atom. Of course, Vyasa does not speak of any such thing, for he is not talking of going around an atom at all. Hence our author has to fabricate such a thing and he starts talking of "an infinitesimal atom and the motion of another particle around it" (p 96). To make the nonsense look imposing, he even gives us a diagram supposed to illustrate "the example given by Vyasa with which he had explained his theory to his world of science in ancient times" (p 97). Referring to this diagram he says, "According to the example given by Vyasa, suppose P is an infinitesimal particle and Q is another particle moving round P in space from east to west, with a certain speed. Let us also suppose that A and B are the position coordinates in the movement of Q around P. Now according to Vyasa, time taken by Q to travel between the space from A to B is called a moment or *kshana* and from B to A constitutes another moment' (p 97). But what is the value of all this from Vyasa's own standpoint? There can be only one answer to it and that is: Plain nonsense based not even on a shallow knowledge of the language in which Vyasa wrote.

Fourthly, it may be of some interest to note that one of the stock arguments of the Indian idealists in their refutation of the atomic hypothesis is to insist that the socalled atom must be conceived as having six different directions—north, south, east, west, upper and lower—and hence also six different parts, which, in other words, is supposed to be the surrender of the very concept of the partless particle. In defence of atomism, therefore, it is strenuously argued that

such directional difference of the atom is itself an undue hypothesis. So Vyasa, who is taking here the conception of the atom seriously, cannot—like our author—talk of anything moving around the atom from its east to its west.

But let us return to the *Yoga-sutra* iii.52 and Vyasa's commentary on it. To recapitulate the main thread of the discussion: In the sutra, Patanjali says that some kind of meditative trance (samyama) on the moment and its succession results in a form of omniscience (vivekaja jnana). Explaining this, Vyasa begins with two alternative definitions of the moment. Then he says, *tatpravahavicchedastu kramah*, (p 93): "its uninterrupted flow is succession or krama".

Ksana-tatkramayo nasti vastu-samahara iti buddhi-samaharo muhurta-ahoratradayah (p 93): "there is no 'substantive conjunction' (*vastu-samahara*) of the moment and its succession; the second, the day and the night are merely the results of their 'intellectual conjunction' (*buddhi-samahara*: some kind of imaginary construction by the intellect)."

sa khalu ayam kalo vastu-sunyo buddhi-nirmanah sabda-jnana-anupati laukikanam vyutthita-darsananam vastu-svrupa iva avabhasate (p 93): "But such time is unsubstantial (*vastu-sunya*: fictitious), created by intellect (*buddhi-nirmanah*: imaginary) and has only verbal knowledge to correspond to (*sabda-jnana-anupati*); it appears (*avabhasate*) as something substantial (*vastu-svarupa:* real by its own nature) only to the deluded lay men."

Ksanastu vastupatitah kramavalambi; kramah ca ksananantaryatma; tat kalavidah kala ityacaksate yoginah (p 93): "Yet the moment is substantive (*vastupatitah:* Vacaspati Misra interprets it as *vastavah*) and it rests on sequence (*krama*). And sequence has for its essence the (passing into) another moment (*ksananantaryatma*). This is what is called time by the yogins who are experts in the knowledge of the real nature of time."

Our author quotes all these passages of *Vyasa-bhasya*

and except for the last of these passages (*ksanastu vastupatitah* etc.) he gives more or less their correct meanings. But he completely twists the meaning of the last passage and on its basis hopes to attribute a purely fanciful view to Vyasa. Thus, our author says, "Hence Vyasa explains that although time does not exist independently, yet it has a *relative material existence,* because the moment is dependent on the sequence and the sequence is a ceaseless flow or continuity of the moments, as *ksanastu vastupatitah kramavalambi.* Hence Vyasa says that the wise who understands this, say that time has a *material existence* or time exists as a 'form of matter' " (p 94).

Thus our author distorts the meaning of the text in order to make it yield the theses—(1) that "time has a *relative material existence*" and (2) moving a step further—that "time has a *material existence* or time exists as a 'form of matter' ". Apart from the mutual inconsistencies of these two claims (for *relative material existence* and *material existence* do not surely mean the same thing), the point to be noted by us is that, after discarding the reality of time as an imaginary construction of the intellect, Vyasa returns to his main theme concerning ksana and tat-krama, i.e. of moment and its sequence. And he argues that *though time is an unreal fiction, moment and its succession are not so.* The moment is real and it has succession as its basis. The claim that this means that time has a relative material existence or that time is a form of matter, is absolute nonsense.

This point is crucial for understanding the actual position of Vyasa. He argues that, though time as ordinarily conceived is an unreal fiction, moment and its succession are not so. Hence he goes on elaborating this point. Immediately after saying the above, he wants to show that the acceptance of the reality of the moment and its succession does not mean the acceptance of the reality of time. Our author quotes only a bit of this subsequent discussion of Vyasa (viz. *na ca dvau ksanau saha bhavatah, kramasca na dvayoh* (pp 97 and 101) and drops the discussion of

Vyasa precirely at the stage at which Yyasa wants to show the real relevance of all this discussion of time and moment from the yoga point of view. Why does our author do so? The evident reason for this is that what Vyasa is driving at does not suit our author's purpose of glorifying his imaginary vedanta dialectics as something of the nature of super-Marxism. Therefore, in order to understand the actual standpoint of yoga and to see how much it is opposed to what Marxism fundamentally stands for, we have to part company of our author and quote the remaining portion of the commentary of Vyasa in the same sutra. Continues Vyasa:

na ca dvau ksanau saha bhavatah, kramasca na dvayoh sahabhuvorasambhavat, purvasmat-uttarabhavino yadanantaryyam ksanasya sa kramah, tasmat vartamano evaikah ksano na purva-uttara-ksanah santiti, tasmatnasti tat-samaharah. Ye tu bhutabhavinah ksanaste parinamanvita vyakhyeyah, tenaikena ksanena kritsno lokah parinamam-anubhavati, tatksanoparudhah khalvami dharmah, tayoh ksana-tatkramayoh samyamat tayoh saksatkaranam. Tatah-ca vivekajam jnanam pradurbhavati.

"Nor can two moments coexist. Nor can there be two sequences (krama), because of the impossibility of their existence together. Sequence is only the tendency of the former moment changing into the latter. *Therefore, there exclusively exists the present moment, there is nothing called the former moment and the latter moment.* Therefore, there is no conjunction of them (i.e. of the two moments). But the (socalled) past and future moments are to be viewed as inherent in the mutation (taking place in the present moment). In that solitary moment are taking place all the changes (parinama) of the entire universe. All qualities have that moment as their substratum. From the meditative trance (samyama) in that one moment, one perceives all (i.e. all the changes in the entire universe). From that arises omniscience (vivekaja jnana)".

A literal translation of what Vyasa says is attempted

above. The literacy of the translation can perhaps be improved, though it is doubtful whether any translation of such Indian philosophical passages can be fully literal. But this does not at all mean that we are unable to understand the main points of Patanjali and Vyasa. These are:

(1) The entire discussion of time, moment and its sequence is only a means to an end. The end is to explain the nature of yogic trance which is supposed to yield some kind of omniscience—vivekaja jnana.

(2) This omniscience consists in the realisation that everything that happens in the entire universe—all changes or mutations of the universe—is concentrated on the solitary moment.

(3) Accordingly, it is necessary to realise that only this solitary moment—which is the present moment—is real; the past moments are unreal and so also are the future moments.

(4) When the yogi is fully absorbed in the exclusive reality of the unique present moment, he becomes free from the deluded understanding of time as consisting also of the past and the future.

Thus, in short, when you are completely engrossed in the unique reality of the present solitary moment, you attain a kind of omniscience called vivekaja jnana. At this stage the past and the future—and therefore time as ordinarily imagined—simply vanish. It is realised that whatever happens, happens in the unique present moment.

With these main points of Patanjali and Vyasa, let us ask ourselves a simple question. Has this philosophy of yoga any remote resemblance to dialectical materialism, a very advanced form of which our author claims to discover in Patanjali and Vyasa? The answer can only be in the negative. If we are at all permitted to read in Patanjali and Vyasa any comparable western philosophy, that is obviously existentialism and not Marxism. Marxism, by contrast, teaches us to learn from history—from the past—in order to fight for the future. It does not teach us that the past and the future are figments of imagination.

Before leaving this discussion, it may be useful to have a few more words on the actual position of Patanjali and Vyasa as related to what is just discussed. Why do they attach so much importance to this conception of vivekaja jnana? In *Yoga-sutra* iii.55 and the commentary on it, it is explained that the attainment of this form of omniscience is *one of the ways* of reaching the stage of kaivalya. Kaivalya stands for the yoga conception of liberation, and, as explained in *Yoga-sutra* ii.25, iii.50, iii.55, iv.34 and iv.26, it means the attainment for the soul (purusa) of the sense of absolute isolation or the total freedom from involvement in the material world.

Peculiarly, however, in *Yoga-sutra* iii.55 and Vyasa's commentary on it, it is declared that this stage of kaivalya is attainable either on the basis of vivekaja jnana or without such an omniscience. Why is this alternative suggestion of attaining liberation or the sense of total isolation without omniscience? Because Patanjali and Vyasa have already suggested an alternative technique of attaining samadhi or the meditative trance leading to liberation. That is meditation on god. This is categorically stated in *Yoga-sutra* 1.23, and to make his position clearer, Patanjali, in the next three sutras (*Yoga-sutra* i.24, i.25 and i.26), gives us his definition of god, the proofs for the existence of god, and describes god as the original preceptor in the long line of preachers to which Kapila, the samkhya philosopher, belongs.

We need not enter here into the details of the theological muck characteristic of Patanjali's yoga; but it needs to be remembered that it is this theology that differentiates his theoretical position from the samkhya philosophy on the fundamentals of which Patanjali wants otherwise to establish his yoga. It is because of this that the peculiar twist given by him to the samkhya philosophy is usually called sesvara samkhya or "samkhya with god", i.e as contrasted with Kapila's samkhya which is fully atheistic or *nirisvara*.

And yet our author is keen on discovering some form of

super-Marxist dialectical materialism in the philosophy of Patanjali! What he has to say, therefore, has very little to do with what Patanjali and Vyasa say. In these circumstances, the only thing on which our author can hope to rely is his own pompous phrasemongering. This he wants the readers to accept as his profoundly new interpretation of Patanjali's yoga.

Here is another example of his empty blast of phrases posed as very profound dialectics discovered in the *Yoga-sutra.*

Our author says, "Thousands of years before Karl Marx, vedanta philosophers were the first geniuses to declare to the world that: *etena bhutendriyesu dharma-laksana-avastha-parinama vyakhyatah*" (p 72).

The passage quoted is *Yoga-sutra* iii.13. Let us first see what this sutra means and we shall then take up the purely gratuitous lecture of our author on it.

Literally the sutra means: "By this (i.e. by what is stated in the previous sutra) is explained (the three forms of) changes of matter (bhuta) and of the sense-organs (indriya)—the changes (parinama) of dharma, laksana and avastha." Thus the sutra speaks of three forms of changes or transformations of matter and the sense-organs and these changes are technically called dharma-parinama, laksana-parinama and avastha-parinama. What then is meant by these three forms of changes? In his commentary on the sutra, Vyasa answers the question and, in order to be clear, illustrates these with the familiar example of clay and jar.

Thus, explaining the first form of transformation or change, viz dharma-parinama, Vyasa says: *mrt-dharmi pindakarat dharmat dharmantaram upasampadya-mano dharmatah parinamate ghatakara iti,* i.e. when the substance (dharmi: the substratum of qualities) clay is transformed from a lump into a jar, its quality, viz the lump-shape, is transformed into the jar-shape; a change like this is called dharma-parinama. Thus, in short, the typical

example of dharma-parinama is the change of shape—from that of a lump into that of a jar.

Explaining the second form of change or transformation, viz laksana-parinama, Vyasa says: *ghatakaro'nagatam laksanam hitva vartamanalaksanam pratipadyate, iti laksanatah parinamate*, i.e. the jar-shape, which belonged to the future, is transformed into the jar-shape as belonging to the present, and it is called laksana-parinama. Thus, in other words, in the lump of clay the jar-shape existed not as a present quality but as a future quality; when however the lump is transformed into the jar, the jar-shape of the future is transformed into the jar-shape of the present—and this is the typical example of laksana-parinama.

Explaining the third form of change or transformation, namely avastha-parinama, Vyasa says: *ghato nava-puratanatam pratiksanam-anubhavan avastha-parinamam pratipadyate iti*, i.e. the jar, by being subject to newness and oldness, undergoes avastha-parinama every moment. Thus, in short, avastha-parinama means the change from the new to the old, or more simply, change due to decay.

Thus Patanjali and Vyasa speak of change or transformation of matter and the sense-organs no doubt and in so far as they accept the reality of change they can perhaps be credited with what Engels calls a "primitive, naive, yet intrinsically correct conception of the world" (*Anti-Duhring*, p 35)—as the same was accepted by some ancient Greek philosophers. However only a complete charlatan with the profoundest ignorance of Marxism can boast of discovering in such a protodialectical outlook the most advanced expression of the laws of materialist dialectics of Marx and Engels. And yet this is precisely what our author does. After quoting this sutra of Patanjali, he comes out with what he considers to be his epoch-making discovery of materialist dialectics in the *Yoga-sutra*, and observes:

"This great sutra or aphorism of Patanjali, like many

such sutras of Badarayana in *Brahma-sutra,* means that in this way, the laws of dialectics, viz dharma-parinam or qualitative change, lakshana-parinam or quantitative change are applicable not only to the inorgnic world (bhoot) but also to the whole of the organic world, including all the processes of the human body and mind (indriya). The first and the last word, viz aten and vyakhyata are of great significance in that it means: so it has been analysed and established and thus has it to be understood.

"This sutra of Patanjali which should be rightly considered the greatest feat of scientific thinking and which runs like a silver thread throughout the fabric of vedanta philosophy, after thousands of years, once again assumed great world significance when Karl Marx literally repeated it in the last century by declaring the universality of the laws of dialectics and established the apex of scientific thinking in the realm of philosophy and science.

"Thus it is clear that the line of the vedic thinking from the very beginning was fundamentally different from the thinking of the western schools of philosophy. Like the Greek thinkers, the vedic thinking does not constitute merely farsighted surmises, or the product of direct perception unsubstantiated scientifically. The vedic thinkers laid down a perfect and scientific theory for every law which they evolved, and with the same language and depth of understanding as modern science can explain, though without its experimental basis evolved by the development of natural sciences of our time" (pp 72-73).

A person who is capable of writing this has absolutely no understanding either of Patanjali or of Marxist dialectics and modern science. And yet the chairman of the Communist Party of India has no hesitation to recommend to the readers "the learned discussion made by Bani Deshpande in this work" (p 10). Must we weep for the party whose chairman chooses to squander credentials in such a reckless manner?

* * *

We have analysed two sutras of Patanjali and Vyasa's commentary on them. These two are selected because our author wants to put the greatest emphasis on them for substantiating his own wild claims about the profound scientific insight of Patanjali and Vyasa and about the astoundingly developed dialectics contained in the yoga philosophy. However, as we have seen, he does not have even an elementary training in Indian philosophy necessary for understanding the plain meaning of these sutras. What is actually said by Patanjali and Vyasa has absolutely nothing to do with what he has to say about their views.

Besides these sutras our author quotes a few more scraps from the *Yoga-sutra* and its commentary. An adequate textual analysis of all of them in their proper context will be an extremely tedious process, the labour of which we may spare ourselves for our present purpose. His understanding of yoga philosophy, in so far as it has become already obvious from the textual analysis of the main evidences on which he relies, does not leave any scope to expect that the subsidiary evidences quoted and interpreted by him from the yoga literature may have some surprising weight to add to his thesis. We may thus ignore the other scraps quoted by our author from the yoga literature and pass on to analyse the actual vedanta passages quoted by him.

Vedanta and Dialectics

Certifying the book, the chairman of the Communist Party of India says, "it is best to turn to the vedanta sutras as explained by Bani Deshpande and their concepts and laws of matter in motion and evolution" (p 11). It is indeed incredible that a responsible comrade can write this. *Vedanta-sutra* is the name of a specific book, alternatively known as the *Brahma-sutra,* which is attributed to Badarayana. Does our author really explain the sutras contained in this *Vedanta-sutra* or *Brahma-sutra?* He does not. Instead he quotes only one sutra from this collection of 555 sutras, and, being what he is—completely ignorant of

Indian philosophy—imagines that the sutra quoted by him represents Badarayana's formulation of "the fundamental law of the development of matter and the whole universe" (p 113).

As is usual with our author, after quoting this sutra he comes out with a pompous lecture on its profound implications for the dialectical outlook:

"This law of *Brahma Sutra* or vedanta means that in the process of the continuous development and transformation of matter, every new stage arises by negating the previous stage by the law of negation of negation and qualitative and quantitative transformation and the development takes place from lower to the higher plane and only in the forward direction, the matter only develops from the past to the present and from present to future" (p 113).

But what is this sutra and what does it actually mean? The sutra (*Br Su* ii.2.20) is: *uttarotpade ca purvanirodhat.* Literally it means: "And because on the origin of the subsequent, the preceding one ceases to be." But what does it mean?

The first thing to be noted about it is that it does not at all represent the view of the *Brahma-sutra* or *Vedanta-sutra* but that of the buddhists. Other considerations apart, this is categorically stated by both Samkara and Ramanuja, the most renowned interpreters of the *Brahma-sutra* or *Vedanta-sutra.* Thus, commenting on the sutra, Samkara says: *ksanabhangavadinah-ayam-abhyupagamah: uttarasmin ksana-utpadyamane purva-ksano nirudhyata iti,* i.e. "The upholders of the theory of momentariness (ksanabhanga-vadinah) argue thus: with the origin of the latter moment, the former moment ceases to exist."

Ramanuja says, *itasca ksanikatvapakse jagat-utpatti-naupapadyate, uttara-ksana-utpatti-velayam purva-ksanasya vinastatvat tasya-uttaraksanam prati hetutva-anupapatteh,* i.e. "For the following reason also the origin of the world cannot be accounted for on 'the view of the momentariness of all existence' (ksanikatvapakse). At the time when the

subsequent momentary existence originates, the preceding momentary existence has passed away."

It requires only an elementary acquaintance with Indian philosophy to know that "ksanabhangavadi" or "the upholder of the theory of momentariness" is a typical form of referring to the buddhists because of their basic claim that "everything is momentary" (sarvam ksanikam). Similarly ksanikatvapakse or "on the view of momentariness of all existence" means only one thing in Indian philosophy, and that is "in the view of the buddhists".

So the view cryptically referred to by the sutra under consideration is the typical view of the buddhists, according to whom "on the origin of the subsequent moment, the previous moment ceases to be". Our author is totally unaware of such an elementary point, takes the view referred to by the sutra as a law enunciated by *Brahma-sutra* or vedanta and mutters his set description of the laws of dialectics much in the manner in which the village magicians mutter their mantras or charms. Apart from the fact that this way of muttering the laws of dialectics is far from betraying any understanding of the laws of matter in motion, the other fact that he reads vedanta in the buddhist theory of momentariness shows that it is below the dignity of any serious student of Indian philosophy to discuss the mumbo-jumbo with the imposing title *The Universe of Vedanta*. It is therefore our great misfortune that the chairman of our party compels us to discuss the mumbo-jumbo as "the vedanta-sutras as explained by Bani Deshpande", in spite of the fact that the only sutra of *Vedanta-sutra* quoted by Bani Deshpande is of the nature of a purva-paksa sutra, i.e. a sutra containing the view of the buddhist opponent of vedanta, mentioned by the author of the *Vedanta-sutra* only for rejecting it.

But let us leave the pseudoerudite nonsense of our author and see why the author of the *Brahma-sutra* quotes this buddhist view. The sutra occurs in that portion of the *Brahma-sutra* where its author proposes to refute all the rival philosophies known to him and thereby prove the

decisive superiority of vedanta. Thus after refuting the atomism of the vaisesikas, he turns to buddhism. During his time buddhism did not represent one philosophical tendency but a variety of philosophical tendencies, of which the most prominent were sarvastivada, vijnanavada and sunyavada. Badarayana wanted to refute all of them and began with the refutation of the older form of buddhist philosophy. According to the early canonical works of the buddhists, the Buddha himself preached "a chain of twelve successive causes" (dvadasa-nidana) accounting for the fact of the sufferings of the world—a world considered real in sarvastivada. This chain of successive causes begins with ignorance (avidya) and ends with decay and death (jaramarana). As against this, Badarayana argues that the Buddha cannot at all speak of such successive causes, because that flatly contradicts his fundamental thesis of momentariness or the view that "on the origin of the subsequent (moment), the preceding (moment) ceases to exist". As Samkara explains the sutra:

"Those who maintain that everything has a momentary existence only admit that when the thing existing in the second moment enters into being, the thing existing in the first moment ceases to be. On this admission it is impossible to establish between the two things the relation of cause and effect, since the former momentary existence which ceases or has ceased to be, and so has entered into the state of nonexistence, cannot be the cause of the later momentary existence.

"Let it then be said that the former momentary existence when it has reached its full development becomes the cause of the later momentary existence.

"That also is impossible; for the assumption that a fully developed existence exerts a further energy, involves the conclusion that it is connected with a second moment (which contradicts the doctrine of universal momentariness).

"Then let the mere existence of the antecedent entity constitute its causal energy.

"That assumption also is fruitless, because we cannot conceive the origination of an effect which is not imbued with the nature of the cause (i.e. in which the nature of the cause does not continue to exist). And to assume that the nature of the cause does continue to exist in the effect is impossible (on the bauddha doctrine), as that would involve the permanency of the cause, and thus necessitate the abandonment of the doctrine of general nonpermanency.

"Nor can it be admitted that the relation of cause and effect holds good without the cause somehow giving its colouring to the effect, for that doctrine might unduly be extended to all cases.

"Moreover, the origination and cessation of things of which the bauddha speaks must either constitute a thing's own form or another state of it, or an altogether different thing. But none of these alternatives agrees with the general bauddha principles. If, in the first place, origination and cessation constituted the form of a thing, it would follow that the word 'thing' and the words 'origination' and 'cessation' are interchangeable (which is not the case).

"Let then, secondly, the bauddha says, a certain difference be assumed, in consequence of which the terms 'origination' and 'cessation' may denote the initial and final states of that which in the intermediate state is called thing.

"In that case, we reply, the thing will be connected with three moments, viz the initial, the intermediate and the final one, so that the doctrine of general momentariness will have to be abandoned.

"Let then, as the third alternative, origination and cessation be altogether different from the thing, as much as a buffalo is from a horse.

"That too cannot be, we reply; for it would lead to the conclusion that the thing, because altogether disconnected with origination and cessation, is everlasting. And the same conclusion would be led up to, if we understood by the origination and cessation of a thing merely its percep-

tion and nonperception; for the latter are attributes of the percipient mind only, not of the thing itself.

"Hence we have again to declare the bauddha doctrine to be untenable."

Our author has very tall things to say about Samkara; he proclaims the great glory of this philosopher ten times (pp 11, 29, 30, 38, 54, 56, 70, 71, 147, 157) in the book. Apparently, however, he prefers not to dabble much with what Samkara actually wrote.

The only genuine writing of Samkara quoted by our author (p 70) for proving vedantic dialectics is a broken sentence from his commentary on *Br Su* ii 1.20: "Thus the nondifference of the effect from the cause". For understanding this broken sentence and its relevance for the dialectical view, we have to quote at some length Samkara's own exposition his view of causality. When we do this we can clearly see how his philosophy stands for the total rejection of the dialectical view:

We have to begin with *Br Su* ii. 1.14: "The nondifference of them (i.e. of cause and effect) results from such terms as 'origin' and the like."

Comments Samkara:

"The effect is this manifold world consisting of *akasa* and so on; the cause is the highest brahman. Of the effect it is understood that in reality it is nondifferent from the cause, i.e. has no existence apart from the cause. How so? —'On account of the scriptural word *origin* and others'. . . .Thus:

"*Ch Up* 6.1.4: 'As, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the modification (i.e. the effect); (the thing made of clay) being a name merely which has its origin in speech, while the truth is that it is clay merely.' The meaning of this passage is . . .

"For these modifications or effects are names only, exist through or originate from speech only, while in reality there exists no such thing as a modification. In so

far as they are names (individual effects distinguished by names) they are untrue; in so far as they are clay they are true. This parallel instance is given with reference to brahman; applying the phrase 'having its origin in speech' to the case illustrated by the instance quoted we understand that the entire body of effects has no existence apart from brahman...

"Other sacred texts also whose purport it is to intimate the unity of the soul are to be quoted here... Such texts are: ...'This everything, all is that soul' (*Br Up* ii. 4.6); 'Brahman alone is all this' (*Mu Up* ii. 2.11); 'The soul is all this' (*Ch Up* vii.25.2); 'There is in it no diversity' (*Br Up* iv.4.25)'...

"We therefore must adopt the following view. In the same way as those parts of akasa which are limited by jars and waterpots are not really dfferent from the universal akasa, and as the water of a mirage is not really different from the surface of a salty steppe—for the nature of that water is that it is seen in one moment and has vanished in the next, and moreover, it is not to be perceived by its own nature (i.e. apart from the surface of the desert)—so this manifold world with its objects of enjoyment, enjoyers and so on has no existence apart from brahman...

"But—it might be objected—brahman has in itself elements of manifoldness. As the tree has many branches, so brahman possesses many powers and energies dependent on those powers. Unity and manifoldness are therefore both true. Thus a tree considered in itself is one, but it is manifold if viewed as having branches; so the sea in itself is one, but manifold as having waves and foam; so the clay in itself is one, but manifold if viewed with regard to the jars and dishes made of it...

"This theory, we reply, is untenable because in the instance (quoted in the upanishad) the phrase 'as clay they are true' asserts the cause only to be true while the phrase 'having its origin in speech' declares the unreality of all effects...

"This doctrine of the individual soul having its self in

brahman, if once accepted as the doctrine of the veda, does away with the independent existence of the individual soul, just as the idea of the rope does away with the idea of the snake (for which the rope had been mistaken). And if the doctrine of the independent existence of the individual soul has to be set aside, then the opinon of the entire phenomenal world—which is based on the individual soul —having an independent existence is likewise to be set aside...

"Moreover, scripture, showing by the instance of the thief (*Ch* VI. 16) that the false-minded is bound while the true-minded is released, declares thereby that unity is the one true existence while manifoldness is evolved out of wrong knowledge. For if both were true how could the man who acquiesces in the reality of this phenomenal world be called false-minded? Another scriptural passage ('from death to death goes he who perceives therein any diversity', *Bri Up* IV, 4, 19) declares the same, by blaming those who perceive any distinction.

"Moreover on the doctrine, which we are at present impugning, release cannot result from knowledge, because the doctrine does not acknowledge that some kind of wrong knowledge, to be removed by perfect knowledge, is the cause of the phenomenal world. For how can the cognition of unity remove the cognition of manifoldness if both are true?

"Other objections are stated.

"If we acquiesce in the doctrine of absolute unity, the ordinary means of right knowledge, perception, &c become invalid because the absence of manifoldness deprives them of their objects; just as the idea of a man becomes invalid after the right idea of the post (which at first had been mistaken for a man) has presented itself. Moreover, all the texts embodying injunctions and prohibitions will lose their purport if the distinction on which their validity depends does not really exist. And further, the entire body of doctrine which refers to final release will collapse, if the distinc-

tion of teacher and pupil on which it depends is not real. And if the doctrine of release is untrue, how can we maintain the truth of the absolute unity of the self, which forms an item of that doctrine?

"These objections, we reply, do not damage our position because the entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered as true as long as the knowldge of brahman being the self of all has not arisen; just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper wakes. For as long as a person has not reached the true knowledge of the unity of the self, so long it does not enter his mind that the world of effects with its means and objects of right knowledge and its results of actions is untrue; he rather, in consequence of his ignorance, looks on mere effects (such as body, offspring, wealth, &c) as forming part of and belonging to his self, forgetful of brahman being in reality the self of all. Hence, as long as true knowledge does not present itself, there is no reason why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not hold on undisturbed. The case is analogous to that of a dreaming man who in his dream sees manifold things, and, up to the moment of waking, is convinced that his ideas are produced by real perception without suspecting the perception to be a merely apparent one.

"But how (to restate an objection raised above) can the vedanta-texts if untrue convey information about the true being of brahman? We certainly do not observe that a man bitten by a rope-snake (i.e. a snake falsely imagined in a rope) dies, nor is the water appearing in a mirage used for drinking or bathing.

"This objection, we reply, is without force (because as a matter of fact we do see real effects to result from unreal causes), for we observe that death sometimes takes place from imaginary venom (when a man imagines himself to have been bitten by a venomous snake), and effects (of what is perceived in a dream) such as the bite of a snake or bathing in a river take place with regard to a dreaming person.

"But, it will be said, these effects themselves are unreal!

"These effects themselves, we reply, are unreal indeed; but not so the consciousness which the dreaming person has of them. This consciousness is a real result; for it is not sublated by the waking consciousness. The man who has risen from sleep does indeed consider the effects perceived by him in his dream such as being bitten by a snake, bathing in a river, &c to be unreal, but he does not on that account consider the consciousness he had of them to be unreal likewise.

"(We remark in passing that) by this fact of the consciousness of the dreaming person not being sublated (by the waking consciousness) the doctrine of the body being our true self is to be considered as refuted...

"When, however, final authority having intimated the unity of the self, the entire course of the world which was founded on the previous distinction is sublated, then there is no longer any opportunity for assuming a brahman comprising in itself various elements.

"But—it may be said—(that would not be a mere assumption, but) scripture itself, by quoting the parallel instances of clay and so on, declares itself in favour of a brahman capable of modification; for we know from experience that clay and similar things do undergo modifications.

"This objection—we reply—is without force, because a number of scriptural passages, by denying all modification of brahman, teach it to be absolutely changeless (kutastha). Such passages are: 'This great unborn self, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, is indeed brahman' (*Bri Up* IV. 4. 25); 'That self is to be described by no, no' (*Bri Up* III. 9.26.); 'It is neither coarse nor fine' (*Bri Up* III. 8. 8). For to the one brahman the two qualities of being subject to modification and of being free from it cannot both be ascribed. And if you say, 'Why should they not be both predicated of brahman (the former during the time of the subsistence of the world, the latter during

the period of reabsorption) just as rest and motion may be predicated (of one body at different times)?' we remark that the qualification 'absolutely changeless' (kutastha) precludes this. For the changeless brahman cannot be the substratum of varying attributes. And that, on account of the negation of all attributes, brahman really is eternal and changeless has already been demonstrated.

"Moreover, while the cognition of the unity of brahman is the instrument of final release, there is nothing to show that any independent result is connected with the view of brahman, by undergoing a modification, passing over into the form of this world, Scripture expressly declares that the knowledge of the changeless brahman being the universal self leads to a result; for in the passage which begins, 'That self is to be described by no, no', we read later on, 'O Janaka, you have indeed reached fearlessness' (*Bri Up* IV. 2. 4). We have then to accept the following conclusion that, in the sections treating of brahman, an independent result belongs only to the knowledge of brahman as devoid of all attributes and distinctions, and that hence whatever is stated as having no special fruit of its own—as, for instance, the passages about brahman modifying itself into the form of this world—is merely to be applied as a means for the cognition of the absolute brahman, but does not bring about an independent result; according to the principle that whatever has no result of its own, but is mentioned in connexion with something else which has such a result, is subordinate to the latter. For to maintain that the result of the knowledge of brahman undergoing modifications would be that the self (of him who knows that) would undergo corresponding modifications would be inappropriate, as the state of final release (which the soul obtains through the knowledge of brahman) is eternally unchanging."

What then is the main point of Samkara? It is that the ultimate reality or brahman is "absolutely changeless"—kutastha. Is this dialectics or the total repudiation of dialectics?

NEITHER MARXISM NOR VEDANTA

G. Ramakrishna

A certain Mr Curtis in his letter to Bertrand Russell had this to say." "One thing continues to puzzle me: the world into which science is leading us bears an ever-increasing resemblance to that envisioned by the ancient theologies... Could the socalled primitives have arrived by sheer guess-work at the true nature of the cosmos?" Russell's reply to this curious query proves very relevant in the context of Bani Deshpande's *The Universe of Vedanta,* which according to S. A. Dange is quite an original contribution to discharging the task of overcoming the inheritance of our feudal and colonial past (p 2). Dange has also maintained that the treatise has some positive contributions to make in the form of "the raising of the question of dialectics, its foundations and character in vedanta or ancient Indian philosophy and its concept of matters in dialectical motion" (*Mainstream,* 14 June, p 24). I wonder whether Dange's characterisation of vedanta indirectly as *the* ancient Indian philosophy is quite deliberate, considering the fact that there are other schools of philosophy also traceable in ancient India in addition to what goes by the name of vedanta about all of which Dange may be expected to be familiar.

Coming back to Mr Curtis's query, the following is the clear reply he received from Russell in a letter dated 22 October 1962: "I am afraid that I do not agree that contemporary events bear out scriptural prophecy except in the sense that *virtually anything can be so considered if the inclination to do so exists.* My own preference is to look upon theological writings as the slightly historical fantasy world of primitive tribesmen, often savage and

sometimes of interest" (*Dear Russell,* Allen and Unwin, p 49, emphasis added). All criticism of Deshpande's "fresh survey of vedanta philosophy" can stop if he agrees to be equated with Mr Curtis, however sensational his disclosures might be as his publishers declare they are.

But Bani is likely to protest vehemently against this by taking strong exception to Russell's references to "primitive tribesmen, often savage" and by asserting forcefully that vedanta is not theological writing, but philosophical. Bani also detests the idea of being called a fanatic when he has taken special care to proclaim that he is the most authentic interpreter of vedanta since the dawn of scholarship, all the "accredited" interpreters before him being only big discredited blunderers. We can't even tell him, lest he be offended, that there is no point in arguing with a scholar to whom nyaya, vaiseshika, samkhya, yoga and advaita (why leave out puva-mimamsa, vishishtadvaita, dvaita, etc.?) are all simply so many schools of vedanta, "all of them basically accepting the doctrine of dialectics" (p 20) or with one to whom shruti and smriti mean the vedas and upanishads (p 21).

He will presumably blast us if we ask him what the dharmashastras are if not smriti. They are, perhaps, on par with the "accredited" interpreters like Shankara and Ramanuja who have missed the kernel of the *Brahmasutra!* The "learned discussion made by Bani Deshpande in this work" (Dange on p 10) is further fortified by the profound remark made by Dange that "the concept of brahma is used both by the materialists and idealists in vedanta philosophy" (p 9). Only a perverted student of vedanta can possibly ask these luminaries who the materialists in vedanta philosophy are! In any case Bani may be depended upon to have some noble point up his sleeve in his defence, for he can prove several things decisively with such astounding success that ultimately either nothing more is left to prove or Bani forgets the point he is about to prove.

Three unforgettable pieces of vedic research have always

haunted me and a fourth one has just been added to the list. The first one is an amusing (I *mean* 'amusing', and not 'amazing' as Bani's usage of 'amusing' seems to mean) interpretation of "vrishabho roraviti" in Rigveda which an enterprising scholar took as scientific proof for the existence of tractors in the vedic period. The onomatopoeic "roraviti" according to him would be appropriate only in the context of a tractor metaphorically referred to as a "vrishabha" by the highly imaginative vedic poet. Another scholar throught that the Rigveda is replete with the tenets of jainism so extensively that it is totally scientific to consider jainism as the only faithful preserver of Rigvedic philosophy. The third scholar was even more generous than Bani with respect to dates. Bani places the Rigveda suktas at 10,000 BC, the *Dharma-sutra* of Jaimini (? Purva-mimamsa sutras, obviously) and *Brahma-sutra* at not later than 1400 BC (p 26) and the *Vishnu-purana* at 100 BC (p 32). It is a pity that nothing worth while ("scientific") was written after the birth of Christ! Incidentally, Dange also seems to have been influenced by Bani's enthusiasm for dates when he places both the Indus civilisation and the Mahabharata war at 3000 BC. Anyway, the scholar I am referring to (Subba Rao is his name) wrote in the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* (Vol 22, pp 280-83) that he had established with authority the fact that the least date acceptable is 40,350 BC for the Rigveda and 23,070 BC for the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, and also rushed to add that the veda must be believed as being coeval with the creation of the world (which must have been an unfortunate happening of the year 40,350 BC precisely). It requires the talents of Bani Deshpande to join the ranks of the trio mentioned above and Bani accomplishes this unenviable task through his "unorthodox and yet revolutionary picture of the vedanta philosophy" (publisher's words).

A friend of mine has opined that the best criticism of Bani's magnum opus would be in the style of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. As one still left with

a mood of reverence towards Marx, I desist from any attempt to parody him in style. All the same, here are a few selected gems of Bani's invincible scholarship, the criticism of which would be quite justified.

Bani says that 'siddhanam Kapilo munih' occurring in the *Bhagavadgita* proves the extreme antiquity of Kapila. (p 66) To wit, can it not be suggested that it proves the late date of the *Gita* instead, as Kapila's samkhya sutras are chronologically of a latter period? He refers to the "*Yogavasishtha* of Valmiki" (p 68). Is this Valmiki the same as the author of *Ramayana*? Not that it matters for Bani's arguments, but that a sense of chronology is helpful in assessing ancient literature. Bani mentions Panini, the grammarian, among "vedic philosophers" like Patanjali, Vyasa and others several times. To call the author of *Yoga-sutra* and his commentator as "vedic philosophers" is a mark of boldness in confessing one's confusion, but it is worse confounded by Bani who brings Panini, a humble grammarian and philologist, into the group.

Bani avers that dharma and lakshana parinamas mean qualitative and quantitative changes in *Yoga-sutra* 3-13 (p 72). Bani believes that this jargon will lend him credibility. But both Patanjali and Vyasa conspire against him in this. To expose the vile tricks of Bani who has mastered the art of parading in Vyasa's plumes, his understanding of this one sutra will suffice. According to Bani, through this sutra the vedanta philosophers as the "first geniuses" had declared to the world "thousands of years before Karl Marx" the great truth about the laws of dialectics (qualitative and quantitative change) being applicable not only to the inorganic world but also to the whole of the organic world, including all the processes of the human body and mind (p 72). But Bani's ingenuous conclusion is negatived once you read the sutra and the bhashya thereon. The sutra reads thus: *Etena bhutendriyeshu dharmalakshanavastha parinama vyakhyatah.* Bani tells us that "etena" (incorrectly written as "aten" by him) is "great significance" as it means "so

it has been analysed and established" (ibid). This is the ill-famed "Curtis method" magnified! "Etena" simply refers to the immediately preceding sutras. Vyasa makes it clear thus: *etena purvoktena chittaparinamena dharma-lakshanavastharupena bhutendriyeshu dharmaparinamo lakshana parinamo' vastha parinamashchokto veditavyah.* In the Mahabharatha, we have a line which reads thus: *bibhetyalpashrutadvedah mamayam pratarishyati* (the veda is afraid of the ill-informed person lest at his hands it be mutilated). The apprehension of the veda can be extended to all other Sanskrit texts as well at Bani Deshpande's hands.

Actually, Patanjali is here explaining the various modifications which occur in respect of mental activity at the time of the two states of samadhi called samprajnata and asamprajnata. *Yoga-sutra* 3.9, 11 and 12 explain the three technical terms nirodha parinama, samadhi parinama, and ekagrata parinama. *Ys.* 3-13 simply points out that nirodha parinama also implies in itself dharma, lakshana and avastha parinamas. It has nothing whatsoever to convey about the qualitative and quantitative changes (the laws of dialectics) as understood by Deshpande. The purport of the sutra is that the object—here the mind—having the characteristic or primary qualities, changes or modifies itself as the characteristics (dharma) change. In other words, during the stages of samprajnata and asamprajnata varieties of samadhi, the mind is modified as there is modification in the characteristics of the mind. There is most certainly a reference here to the behaviour of the mind according as to whether the objects grasped are many or not so many. To equate this with the law of dialectics is an oversimplification of the law itself. Vyasa's commentary is again a pointer to this. This is what he says:

"The three modifications of the mind (based on the change in characteristic, secondary quality and condition—dharma, lakshana and avastha) are noticed only so long as the characterised and the characteristic are seen as

distinct from each other. The modification will, however, be only one (and not three) when this distinction is not taken into consideration. It is not right to make a distinction between the characteristic and the characterised, as the characteristic is the very being of the characterised... The characteristic present in an object changes its state in the past, present and future, but the substance itself does not change. For example, when a golden object is mutilated for being made into a different object, it is only the condition of gold that changes, and not the gold itself. Similarly, a person changes in relation to time; nevertheless, the person remains the same."

Vachaspati Mishra elucidates this further with other illustrations. It should not be forgotten that all the discussion is in the context of the naure of the mind in the process of the conditioning of the flow of the mind towards objects, i.e. "chittavrittinirodha". Immediately after the above-quoted passage, Vyasa takes to the refutation of the buddhist position with regard to the nature of modification and arrives at the theory of causation as enunciated by the samkhya. Proceeding further, Vyasa has the following: "What is the general meaning of modification? It is the manifestation of a certain characteristic on the removal of a previous characteristic of a substance, which substance is itself constant."

Finally, why do Patanjali and Vyasa initiate this discussion at all? It is for establishing their contention that the practice of samyama (a technical term indicating the three internal accessories of yoga, namely dharana, dhyana, and samadhi) on different objects leads to the accruing of different fruits. *Yoga-sutra* 3.9-15 explains the modifications allegedly expounding the law of dialectics according to Deshpande. The fruit that accrues to a person who practises samyama on the three modifications of an object is mentioned in *Ys.* 3.16. According to that, one who so practises samyama will obtain the knowledge of the past and the future (of the modification of the objects) when once one obtains the direct knowledge of them at the

present time (*parinamatrayasamyamadatitanagatajnanam*). The statement does not concern itself with any theory of regulated change.

Further, please let us be clear that this has nothing to do with the scientific analysis of society at any given time (production relations and the rest of it) for Bani to argue that the yogi practising and perfecting samyama on modifications (parinama) is a super-Marxist equipped with historical materialism and thus having a clear picture of the evolution of society from primitive communism to slavery and what have you. Bani Deshpande's feat is a brilliant exercise in suppressing the truth of what Patanjali and Vyasa say in order to suggest falsehood in the form of making them reliable dialecticians. That is what provokes him to declare that it can be conclusively proved (if so, why not prove it?) that "the vedic thinking, after more than two thousand years, reached Marx through Aristotle and Hegel although in a very crude form because of their inability to understand the way the Indian thinkers had developed it" (p 50).

At the outset it must be said that the "Plagiarist Marx" is inexcusable in that he does not openly acknowledge what he owes to Bani's vedic thinking! Bani's discovery is not just the result of his being "very much prone to a hyperbolic style" as Dange seeks to explain away the distortions and chauvinism of Deshpande. It is an intelligently contrived butchery of both Marxism and vedanta. Whatever the heftiness of Bani's pedestrian intellectual joke discernible in the statement quoted above, one question needs to be posed. Both Dange and Deshpande have shown their awareness of the inevitability of this question, without, however, bothering to answer it. I suspect that they lacked the will to answer that question as the answer would have wrecked all their fond theories.

This attitude is understandable in the author of *The Universe of Vedanta* but quite out of place in the author of *India: From Primitive Communism to Slavery*. The question is anticipated by Dange (p 3): "He (Bani

Deshpande) maintains that despite the nonexistence of modern sciences, as they are today, one branch of the philosophy of vedanta monism *was based on a fully and logically argued system of dialectical materialism,* though he does not, in this set of papers, go into *the historical question as to how this could be achieved and established"* (emphasis added).

The theory of knowledge demands that this question be answered first and both Dange and Deshpande seek shelter under the concept of intuition. Firstly, intuition strikes those who are constantly working on a problem and not to all and sundry. Secondly, this 'intuitive knowledge' concerns the object which these seekers are investigating and not something else. The well-known experience of Kekule amply substantiates this. (For a discussion on this, rather in the style of Bani Deshpande, see *Yoga Mimamsa,* Lonavla, volumes VIII and IX.)

Now, the question is this: Is samyama a mental activity backed up by investigation, for intuitive knowledge to arise? The answer cannot be 'yes' in the light of some of the sutras of Patanjali like the following in addition to the one referred to earlier. *Yoga sutra* 3.26 says that the fruit of the practice of samyama on the sun is a knowledge of the universe, or a knowledge of the worlds (*bhuvanajnanam surye samyamat*). Commenting on this sutra, the unparalleled scientist and perfect dialectician of Bani's imagination, namely Vyasa, details the conception of the universe of which knowledge is obtained.

Bani will be despaired to know what startling admissions Vyasa makes in describing the universe. According to him, the bhurloka is the region between Avichi and the back of the Meru mountain. And then you have the antariksha loka, svarloka and maharloka beyond which is the threefold brahma region comprising janaloka, tapoloka and sathyaloka. Without going into this mythical description of the universe any further, I plead with Deshpande to read it and write another treatise on the scientific accuracy of Vyasa's grasp of the universe.

Let it be remembered that samyama on surya is not a detailed investigation of the universe (of which knowledge is automatically obtained). Instead of investigation, Patanjali recommends withdrawal of the mind (chittavrittinirodha) which is what yoga is all about, the objective being the achievement of kaivalya, which can crudely be translated as "aloofness" (of the purusha from prakriti). All the same, the claim is made that samyama on surya leads to knowledge of the universe. To add to Bani's discomfort there is Vachaspati Mishra who while commenting on this sutra (3.26) says that "surya" here refers to the "sushumna nadi" an observation which blocks the way for Deshpande's possible outbursts about Vyasa's intricate knowledge of interplanetary projectiles. It is obvious then that the 'bhuvanajnana' (knowledge of the universe) following from the practice of samyama on the surya is not the kind of intuitive knowledge that a Kekule might obtain.

The whole of the third section of the *Yoga-sutra* called the vibhuthi pada (and it is not sadhana pada as Deshpande tells us; it is the second section that is called sadhana pada) is flooded with the fruits that accrue to one who practises samyama on different objects. It may yield knowledge or it might yield certain supernatural powers (siddhis). Thus, for example, *Ys* 3.26 and 3.27 say that samyama on the moon (which might mean some nadi other than the sushumna) leads to the knowledge of the stars and on the polestar to the knowledge of the movement of the stars. *Ys* 3.29 says that a concentration on the navel circle enables you to obtain the knowledge of the whole body. You can overcome thirst, hunger and other ugly demands of the body through the practice of samyama on the pit of the throat, etc. (*Ys* 3.30: *kanthakupe kshutpipasanivrittih*). It is rather ungenerous of the dialecticians-cum-scientists, namely Patanjali and Vyasa, not to have mentioned the object on which samyama is to be practised for obtaining the knowledge of putting an end to the exploitation of man by man!

The claims of the *Yoga-sutra* are either scientific or not. Just one or two sutras should not be singled out for being credited with "scienceness" as Deshpande does. That is how the edifice of the laws of dialectics in Vyasa so ably engineered by Bani crumbles, like everything else he constructs does. Returning to that glorious statement of Bani about vedic thinking being inherited by Marx through Aristotle and Hegel, we must pose yet another, and more crucial, question. The thinking of Marx (albeit inherited from the vedic seers) initiated a series of programmes and organisations for bringing about a radical change in the socioeconomic and cultural life of mankind. How is it that the proud owners of this rich legacy of lofty thoughts failed to initiate any programme for even an infinitesimal change towards socioeconomic justice?

I suppose the tall claims of Bani Deshpande must be examined in this background also. Usage of superlatives may lend charm to the personality of an individual, but such usage will not make an absurd theory scientific. In one paragraph Deshpande has the following seductive phrases to hurl: glaring proof, highest achievement at scientific thinking, superb attempt, solving thereby very scientifically the greatest problem of all times, basing their theory and science on the highly perfected laws of dialectics, utmost significance, etc (p 76). Instead of convincing you, these phrases only make you nauseated. And it is a commentary on the hollowness of Deshpande's research, whose knowledge of Sanskrit is puzzling.

This is illustrated in his translation of a line from Vyasa in his commentary on *Ys* 3.52 which says that the practice of samyama on moment and its succession (i.e. time) leads to the knowledge born of intellect (*kshanatatkramayoh samyamadvivekajam jnanam*). Commenting on *Ys* 2.50 Vachaspati Mishra, who is not mentioned by Bani among the perfect dialecticians, points out that a kshana (moment) is the fourth part of the time taken to shut one's eyes (*nimesha-kriyavicchinnasya kalasya chaturtho bhagah kshanah*). Vyasa explains 'kshana' as the minu-

test part of time, just as atom is with respect to matter. Another explanation that he gives is that kshana is the time required for an atom to move from its preceding position to the succeeding position when it is in motion (*Yathapakarsha-paryantam dravyam paramanurevam paramapakarsha paryantah kalah kshanah. Yavata va samayena chalitah paramanuh purvadesham jahyaduttaradeshamupasampadyeta sa kalah kshanah*).

It is the latter part of Vyasa's analysis that is the central theme of Bani's discoveries. His translation of the said line is here: "A moment is a (sic !) time required to go around from the east to the west of an infinitesimal particle or 'paramanu' of a substance or 'dravyam' " (p 92). Even ignoring the bad syntax of this sentence, the translation is very poor and even misleading and Bani is agitated and offended because in his criticism Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya does not pay attention to this part of his immaculate research (*Mainstream*, 31 May, p 27). Deshpande who is saturated with scholasticism needs to be reminded that 'purva' in Sanskrit is not always the 'east' and 'uttara' is never the 'west'. They mean "preceding" and "succeeding' respectively. The horrible translation of his is the basis for all the pedantic nonsense that follows and there is also a neat diagram based on this erroneous translation of Vyasa (p 97). His "highly scientific kshana theory" thus falls flat and there is no question of "position coordinates" and the like here.

After defining kshana, Vyasa has the following: "An unbroken flow of such moments is the succession of moments. The succession of moments has no aggregate as a substance; it is only an intellectual aggregate giving rise to such concepts as the muhurta, the day, the night, etc. Following the verbal idea (shabdajnana), this time becomes an intellectual creation, although it is devoid of reality (vastushunyah); and this to ordinary persons with an active perceptive faculty (vyutthitadarshananam) seems to be the real nature of the substance."

This part of the text is fairly accurately summarised by

Bani also. But the monstrosity is not far off. The next line is "*kshanastu vastupatitah kramavalambi, kramashcha kshananantaryatma tam kalavidah kala ityachakshate yoginah*". Bani's translation, or rather transcreation, is this: "Although time does not exist independently, yet it has a *relative material existence*, because the moment is dependent on the sequence and sequence is a ceaseless flow or continuity of the moments" (p 94. emphasis in the original).

There is nothing in Vyasa corresponding to Bani's imposing phrase "relative material existence", a phrase so much required for Bani's further perorations. All that the modest Vyasa suggests is that kshana is a measurement dependent on objects and supported by succession (vastupatitah and kramavalambi). He is only reiterating what he has said earlier that time is an intellectual concept although devoid of reality (*kshanatatkramayornasti vastusamahara iti buddhisamaharo muhurtahoratradayah. Sa khalvayam kalo vastushunyo'pi buddhinirmanah, etc.*). It is preposterous to understand it as Bani does: "Here Vyasa says (that) the wise, who understand this, say that time has a *material existence* or time exists as a 'form of matter' " (p 94).

Vyasa is quite innocent of such charges levelled against him by Bani. That is clear from what Vyasa says further in his commentary, but Bani specialises in isolating or even alienating passages from their full context, as that suits his wild imagination best. He can then draw facile and fantastic deductions and couch them in chauvinistic terminology to declare: "Thus we see that Vyasa has explained the concept of time as a reflection of the universal property of material processes to follow one another in a definite sequence and has elaborated it as scientifically and in the same language in which it is explained and established in modern science, not independently of matter but only in relation to the universal property of material processes" (p 94).

But the hyperbolic deduction is not over yet. A fitting

end to it can only be with this: "By establishing this highly scientific concept of time, vedanta thinkers lead us, as if from the dialectical philosophy of the nineteenth century of Marx, into the twentieth century of science led by Einstein" (p 95). Needless to say that Bani richly possesses that "inclination to do so" which Russell mentioned in his reply to Curtis.

Bani has the following: "Scientifically speaking, this definition (of brahman as *digdeshakalabhedashunyam*) is the most brilliant and supreme feat of the genius of the vedanta philosophers and as far as scientific thinking is concerned, is only comparable to the highest achievements of modern science. *Digdeshakala - bhedashunyam - brahma* is the most scientific expression which truly reflects their concept of the existence of the physical reality, the universe, the brahma and which can be literally expressed as 'the existence in space-time-continuum' " (p 110). Even granting the incorrect interpretation of 'brahman' as universe to be acceptable, this statement of Bani is nothing more than a fine specimen of the repetitive heaping of high-sounding words, in which Bani excels.

Yet the sagacious Bani says: "In my opinion. the definition of *digdesha - kala - bhedashunyam – brahma* is more correct, appropriate and meaningful than even the definition of space-time-continuum as given by Einstein because the vedic definition carries more clearer (?) the scientific concept of physical reality, as a continuity of matter in perpetual motion and development than the (?) Einstein's concept of continuum" (p 111). Not to comment on this is the best commentary on the power and gusto of Deshpande's deductions. Suffice it to say that the whole book is filled with such inconsequential assertions.

As we have seen earlier, Bani's theory of knowledge has it that mankind is gradually going down the slope of knowledge from the stage of perfection to imperfection. If that is against the tenets of Marxism, so much the worse for Marxism. After all, is it Bani's fault if the ancient Indians made a correct prophecy about the future

development of society or stumbled on it? (see, Deshpande in *Mainstream,* 24 May, p 28). Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya and S. R. Bhat have both highlighted the remarkable feat of Bani in misunderstanding the upanishadic passage "vijnanamanandam brahma" as "that the real pleasure of life lies only in the scientific investigation of the universe, in the pursuit of knowledge" (p 151). An equally novel meaning is given to the 'neti neti' passage (p 121). Thanks to Deshpande this passage becomes a cryptic enunciation of the progressive theory of knowledge. Bani who gracefully accepts the essential tenet "that the quest for knowledge is endless" nevertheless seeks to establish that perfect and complete knowledge is what characterises vedanta. And he also posits that vedanta is the repository of infallible absolute knowledge and therefore is by right superior to Marxism or any ism for that matter.

Again, at Bani's hands "mantravidya" becomes electrotherapy. For a person like Bani to whom making a statement is enough as a proof for the correctness of the content of the statement in question, nothing should be difficult to prove. It would be interesting to make a list of all the things that Bani can either prove or has already proved. But it will be such a long list that one gets tired in preparing it. But Bani will prove all that tirelessly, equipped as he is with the perfect law of vedanta dialectics. It will perhaps not be long before Bani "clearly establishes" that astrology is "amusingly highly scientific" and also based on "the dialectics of vedanta". Like Thomas Gradgrind insisting vehemently on facts and subscribing to the view that one should not wonder but face facts, our Bani Deshpande insists on a highly scientific analysis and declares that the last word has been said about the fact of universe!

Bani admonishes all students to develop an attitude of objective reverence towards ancient Indian philosophy: "Instead of so succumbing to western influence, it is the duty of every Indian intellectual (and Bani includes himself among them—GR), to study the (?) Indian philosophy, try

to understand it properly and prove its healthy and rich inheritance or its obscurantist character" (p 39; quoted by him also in *Mainstream*, 31 May, p 27). Our grouse is that this revaluation principle has not been observed in practice by Bani Deshpande. Physician, heal thyself!

As Bani refers to the science of yoga several times, it may be pointed out to him that a few tangible scientific experiments *have been* conducted on the subject. He can acquaint himself with it if he cares by *discriminatingly* going through the volumes of *Yoga-mimamsa*, a journal published from Lonavla. Several mythical claims of yoga to which Bani subscribes have been exploded through these experiments conducted by that pioneering researcher Swami Kuvalayananda. Dange, if not Deshpande, ought to be familiar with these researches. Kuvalayananda was not a Marxist but he knew more of Marxism than the self-styled Marxist Bani Deshpande does. If Deshpande had been as true a student of Marxism and vedanta as Kuvalayananda was of the science of yoga, *The Universe of Vedanta* would not have been written, and the misplaced upstartish vituperation of others in his rejoinder could have been avoided. If the "treatise" of Bani irritates you and makes you puke (to use Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*-phrase) his reply to Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya makes you disgusted and you will write him off as one with whom no meaningful communication is possible. I do not think that any serious student of philosophy will betray any sympathy for the desperate hotch-potch churned out by Bani Deshpande. He ends his magnum opus thus: "I have made a small attempt in understanding its (i.e. of vedanta philosophy) scientific content by presenting it in the perspective of dialectical materialism—the language of the greatest science of the vedanta philosophers and modern times" (p 160). I have a small amendment to suggest so that what Bani Deshpande has done may be more aptly summarised. —Substitute "mean" for "small" in that last sentence and that will be as precise a description of Bani's marvellous research as any can be.

ON THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING THE BOOK "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

S. A. Dange

The book *The Universe of Vedanta* by Bani Deshpande and my preface to it have attracted wide attention both among communist and noncommunist circles. This was not unexpected. In my preface itself I had stated that the book was "bound to be controversial" and I would leave many of the questions "to the learned experts to argue" (p 3).

But I am not writing this note to polemise on the subject as has already been done by some.

The secretariat of the party has stated that the preface and the book "do not represent the views of the party". This negative statement is enough for the present, though neither myself nor Bani Deshpande had claimed or even suggested that this was the party view on vedanta or ancient Indian philosophy. But in any case it was thought better to be clear about people and problems, even if in a negative way.

The book no doubt contains one serious deviation. It gives the impression of equating vedanta philosophy with Marxism and even suggesting its superiority on some points. This approach arises from that wellknown temptation to make Marxism easily acceptable or understandable to those who would approach it only in terms of their old philosophical outlooks. But by this one falls into that deviation about which Lenin had warned Gorky when he wanted to call communism a "religion".

The second shortcoming is that the author is very much prone to a hyperbolic style and sometimes to irreverent

attitudes, which should be eschewed in a scientific work. There are also some small errors on facts of history.

While noting these things, I cannot but say that these negative aspects have been overplayed by critics and have been used to overshadow the *positive contributions* of the treatise.

That positive part is the raising of the question of dialectics, its foundations and character in vedanta or ancient Indian philosophy and its concept of matter in dialectical motion.

The second positive contribution is raising the question of new research in Indian philosophy, particularly its vedanta school and its understanding of brahma, matter, space and time in their dialectical and integrated relationship and all that it leads to. The "discovery" of materiality of time and other concepts in the Brahma-Sutra and other vedic literature (however short they be, as some say, of the Einsteinian content) seem to have bowled our author off his feet and thrown him into such excitement as led him to an overestimation of our ancient history and philosophy.

The third positive point is the raising of the question of the role of "creative intuition" (not mystical) in historical developments, the "eureka moment", if one may characterise it so, in a popular way. This subject is under discussion by many philosophers and scientists here and abroad.

Hence I should like to say that I do not agree with the main points of the criticisms made by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya and Dr Adhikari, as they do not embrace the real core of the questions raised by the author on the basis of the extant philosophical texts.

Many Marxist scholars maintain that in the very nature of things, ancient Indian dialectics could not be that deep and scientifically developed as Hegelian or Marxist dialectics is because of the very lack of the modern development of natural sciences and the perception and consciousness

they generate in the historical process of human society and individual consciousness. This question requires to be argued more seriously than in mere political polemics.

In my opinion, if Bani Deshpande had limited himself to the important question of dialectics in vedanta philosophy, whether idealist or materialist, and the concept of matter in motion therein, he would have got a better hearing.

I do not wish to write more now because I think that polemics as such, whether politically-motivated or demagogic or genuine, would not be politically helpful *at present.*

I should also record that what I am saying here does not represent anybody's views, except my own.

One may ask, why I did not make these points when I wrote the preface, though in some ways, the preface is a thesis by itself, apart from the book. I will not go into that now. One thing I can say is that it has nothing to do with family-relationship as some shallow critics have hinted.

I ended my preface to the book by quoting Marx's eighth thesis on Feuerbach on finding the rational solution of mysticism in social—human—practice and the comprehension of this practice.

I will close this note by quoting Marx's eleventh and last thesis on Feuerbach, which says, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it" (emphasis in the original).

And our party is essentially built for that. It however does not mean that philosophy is unnecessary, but that it has to be made into an instrument of revolutionary change.

CONSENSUS OF THE CONFERENCE ON "THE UNIVERSE OF VEDANTA"

The conference called by the central party education department of the CEC of the CPI, on the instruction of the central secretariat, on 6 and 7 May 1975 to critically examine the book *The Universe of Vedanta* written by Bani Deshpande was participated in by S. A. Dange and comrades from Andhra, W. Bengal, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, UP and Delhi. C. Rajeswara Rao, N. K. Krishnan, Bhupesh Gupta and Indrajit Gupta also attended some sessions. Rajasekhara Reddi was in the chair.

18 comrades spoke during the discussions.

The consensus of the conference was that such meetings were both necessary and fruitful. The discussions with *The Universe of Vedanta* as the focus covered a wide range of issues relating to the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, the heritage of our country and the proper attitude to it, problems of natural science and philosophical problems.

The consensus of the conference was that *The Universe of Vedanta* written by Bani Deshpande grossly violated the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and scientific thinking generally, overlooked the real achievements of our culture and philosophy and glorified negative features which were the result of the pressures and needs of the decadent ruling exploiting classes. It was also based on shallow scholarship and contained elementary mistakes in relation to Sanskrit texts and scientific facts.

The foreword by Dange basically defends this wrong, unscientific and anti-Marxist-Leninist approach and contains other untenable formulations, e.g. on intuition and yoga.

The conference's consensus was that the following theses formed the basis of the book:

(1) That the dialectics of Marx and Engels had already been discovered in a complete and even higher form by the vedantavadins.

(2) That it is not necessary to take a stand on the materialism-idealism struggle in Indian philosophy. Though the author systematically avoids the answer to the question whether vedanta philosophy was idealist or materialist, the book itself is entirely idealist and mystic in outlook and repudiates materialism.

(3) That the latest scientific discoveries of modern science, including those of Einstein made in the early 20th century, were already present in the vedanta teachings which thus went beyond Marx and Engels.

(4) That the vedanta teaching represented the highest possible peak of human thinking in the past, present and future.

(5) That various calculations were made by the vedantavadins which enabled them to foresee with great accuracy the exact date of the establishment of socialism and communism in the world; that the future was already in existence to which it was possible to react.

(6) That all this was possible despite the lack of the adequate material conditions (despite the extreme underdeveloped state of production and of society as a whole) because of the training of the body and of intuition through yoga, thus doing away with the need of historical development as such.

(7) That class struggle was virtually absent in ancient India and consequently had no significance in the realm of philosophy.

(8) That Marx and Engels themselves were enamoured of vedanta and Lenin urged its propagation and that this, therefore, is the task of the party today.

In addition the book contains formulations of a chauvin-

ist nature, denigrating the achievements of other cultures and uncritically glorifying everything in our past.

The consensus of the conference, therefore, was that *The Universe of Vedanta*, far from helping the struggle against revivalism, actually brings grist to its mill. Objectively it, along with the foreword, helps the class enemies in their attack on Marxism-Leninism, lowers the prestige of the party and creates ideological confusion in the party. The book needs to be repudiated by the party.

The consensus was that India has a great and glorious philosophical and cultural heritage. The CPI is intensely proud of these great achievements over thousands of years and believes that the working class, the working people and all democratic sections are the true inheritors of these achievements and it is their responsibility to enrich them further. At the same time, it is necessary to adopt a proper critical approach to our past, to struggle against glorification of those aspects which reflected the narrow selfish interests of the exploiters. to reject any attempt to denigrate the culture of other peoples and to wage an uncompromising ideological battle against the revivalists, reactionaries and others who seek to usurp and distort our heritage.

The consensus of the conference was that it is an important and urgent task of the CPI to carry on further Marxist-Leninist research into the history and philosophy of our country. This would entail further serious study, collective effort and organised discussion.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT RESOLUTION

The central secretariat of the Communist Party of India endorses the conseusus arrived at by the conference on the book *The Universe of Vedanta* convened by the education department of the party and published in the *Party Life.*

(From front flap)

Another trend, and a sophisticated one, brings grist to the mill of the reactionary ideology. This trend propagates the false view that everything achieved by Marxism today, and by science in modern times, was already there in the vedas and upanishads. They say, Marxism has learned or stolen everything from our Indian philosophy and has tried to be original.

This chauvinist trend is extremely dangerous. Its slanders against Marxism aim at isolating the most revolutionary philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism. Only by refuting this chauvinist trend can Marxism go forward in India.

It is the job of the Indian Marxists to show all the positive heritage of India, to preserve what is useful in Indian philosophy, even in idealist Indian philosophy, and to carry forward the ideological struggle against the ideology of the exploiting classes to the end, basing on the proven ideology of Marxism-Leninism, dialectical and historical materialism.

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